REMARKS

ON THE LATE

EARL of CHESTERFIELD's

LETTERS to his SON.

By WILLIAM CRAWFORD, M. A.

Maxima puero debetur reverentia.

JUV.

Quo semel est imbuta recens, servabit odorem
Testa diu.

HOR.

DUBLIN:

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M,DCC,LXXVI.

BRITISH MUSEUM

PREFACE.

LORD CHESTERFIELD's letters had been publiſhed a conſiderable time before they fell into the hands of the author of the following dialogues. His remote ſituation from the capital, and other circumſtances, prevented him from having an earlier opportunity of gratifying his curioſity. As ſoon as he had procured the book, he ſat down with avidity to read it; and after having run over the greater part of the letters contained in the firſt volume, moſt heartily joined with the public,

in paying the noble author the tribute of applauſe, which he was perſuaded, he juſtly merited. The graceful eaſe, and beautiful elegance of his ſtyle, the propriety of his inſtructions, and the perſuaſive manner in which he conveys them, afforded him a very high degree of pleaſure; but before he had finiſhed the laſt volume, his ſentiments were totally changed: He diſcovered, to his great diſappointment, that, his Lordſhip, whilſt he laboured with anxious ſolicitude to qualify his ſon, for making a figure in the world as a ſtateſman and a courtier, and to embelliſh him with all the politer and more graceful accompliſhments, exerted

erted the utmoſt power of an artful inſinuating addreſs, to make him a libertine on principle, to corrupt his morals, and render him inſenſible to the exalted obligations of religion and virtue. A juſt deteſtation of an attempt ſo inglorious, ſo unnatural, ſo inconſiſtent with the duties of a parent, a chriſtian, and a member of ſociety, produced theſe dialogues. When finiſhed, they were ſhewn to a friend, for whoſe judgment the author has ever entertained the higheſt reſpect, and by his advice they are now offered to the public.

Openly to attack a writer who was ſo eminently diſtinguiſhed by dignity of ſtation,

his conſequence in the political world, very remarkable external accompliſhments, uncommon brilliancy of parts, and who in the preſent inſtance, is ſo highly admired by numbers of almoſt every claſs of men, may be thought to require ſome apology. But let it be remembered, that elevation of rank, knowledge, wit, genius, and engaging addreſs, when proſtituted to an unworthy purpoſe, and uſed as the means of injuring the nobleſt and moſt important intereſts of mankind, inſtead of intitling their poſſeſſor to regard, render him, in a peculiar manner, the object of diſguſt and deteſtation.

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The very favourable reception Lord Cheſterfield's letters have met with from the world, is, perhaps, the beſt reaſon that can poſſibly be given, for attempting to exhibit them in their proper colours. For ſhould the corrupt principles, recommended in theſe letters, univerſally prevail and produce their full effect, what would be the conſequence? The laws would be deprived of their ſalutary power, the tendereſt, the deareſt ties of humanity would be violated, diſſoluteneſs of morals would uſurp the place of decency and good manners, and the Britiſh Empire, the glory among the nations, would be ſhaken to its very centre. This

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is an object which ſeems not unworthy the attention of even the legiſlature. But in theſe days of polite refinement, a becoming oppoſition to the ſources of corruption, which every where abound, is not to be expected from thoſe, whoſe ſtation and authority give them the greateſt influence. *Omnia in pejus ruunt.*

The encomiums beſtowed on this publication, and the eagerneſs with which it has been read, afford but too ſtriking a ſpecimen of the prevailing taſte. There was a time when inſtead of being applauded and admired, it would have been received with deteſtation and abhorrence. It

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muſt however be allowed, that in ſeveral reſpects it has ſome claim to our approbation. It diſplays parental affection, (abſtracted from the views by which it is directed) in a very amiable light. It has innumerable graces of language, ſtyle, and manner, diſcovers in many places much ingenuity, and in all a thorough knowledge of the world. It contains excellent precepts of politeneſs and propriety of behaviour; and, frequently inculcates ſentiments, that, conſidered in themſelves, have a powerful tendency to warm and animate us with the love of virtue. But it is in theſe ſentiments that the poiſon chiefly

ly lurks. They ſeem to gloſs over his Lordſhip's deſign of forming the finiſhed politician, and man of the world, on the ruins of thoſe divine principles, which alone can render any character worthy of eſteem. They tend to miſlead the underſtanding, to conceal the deformity of what is obnoxious, and give the reader a favourable opinion of the whole, which otherwiſe he could not poſſibly have. Hence the Danger to which the heart is expoſed of receiving from it, inſenſibly, the ſeeds of depravity and corruption.

Whether theſe Dialogues will, in any meaſure, anſwer the end deſigned, the author cannot

cannot ſay. As to Lord Cheſterfield's greateſt admirers, ſuch as have contracted a habit of the faſhionable vices of the age, to whoſe taſte his letters are peculiarly adapted, he cannot ſuppoſe that they will think them worthy of the leaſt attention. But may he not hope, that they will meet with a more candid treatment from thoſe of leſs vitiated ſentiments, and that they will not be diſpleaſed with this feeble effort to point out to them a rock, which threatens with deſtruction? Particularly, he would flatter himſelf that it may yet be of ſome uſe, in preſerving the minds of youth, for whom it is more immediately

ately calculated, from the contagion of his Lordſhip's licentious principles. Be the event what it may, when the awful moment arrives in which the ſprings of life ſhall fail, and the hand that now guides his pen, ſhall be about to crumble into duſt, it will afford him ſome conſolation to reflect, that he has offered up this ſmall tribute to Religion and Virtue.

DIALOGUES.

DIALOGUES

BETWEEN A

PRECEPTOR and his PUPIL, &c.

DIALOGUE I.

CONSTANTIUS, EUGENIUS.

Con. I REJOICE to ſee you, Eugenius. I hope you have ſpent the vacation agreeably.

Eug. I have indeed, Sir, ſpent it very much to my ſatisfaction.

Con. I know you have devoted a proper part of it to the improvement of your mind; tell me what Books you have read?

Eug. Among others, one has fallen into my hands which has afforded me not a little entertainment and inſtruction, I mean Lord CHESTERFIELD'S LETTERS.

Con. It gives me concern to hear that you have met with that pernicious book, and ſtill more that you ſpeak of it in ſuch terms of approbation.

Eug. Dear Sir, you ſurpriſe me very much, Lord Cheſterfield's Letters are exceedingly admired, they are read ſo univerſally by every one of taſte, that they have paſſed already through ſeveral editions.

Con. I know it, and with that inward pain which every honeſt man muſt feel, on ſeeing ſentiments propagated, and received with favour, very prejudicial to the intereſts of mankind.

Eug. I hope Sir, I have profited too much by the inſtructions I have received from you, not to reject with indignation any book that appears to me to have ſuch a tendency.

Con. I am convinced you would from what I know of the diſpoſitions of your mind; but I can eaſily account for any miſtake which you and others may have fallen into with reſpect of this matter. Lord Cheſterfield, if we only conſider his manner, is certainly a moſt pleaſing and entertaining writer; in particular his epiſtolary ſtyle is perhaps the moſt perfect model of the kind to be met with; the dreſs with which he clothes his thoughts, is ſo eaſy, polite, and elegant, that it is no wonder he ſhould impoſe on many, more eſpecially the young, who are frequently leſs attentive to the juſtneſs and propriety of a ſentiment, than to the manner in which it is expreſſed.

Eug. The graceful ornaments of Lord Cheſterfield's language delighted, perhaps they have

ſeduced me, and tempted me to give my approbation too haſtily to opinions that will not bear the teſt of ſober reflection. But as I know you are an enemy to implicit faith, and have ever taught me that it is unmanly and irrational for any one to acquieſce in an opinion which appears to him unſupported by the evidence of truth, I muſt take the liberty to aſk you, what are the things you find fault with in the book we ſpeak of?

Con. I have many objections to it, particularly I am convinced that no publication has appeared in the world for many years leſs friendly to religion and virtue.

Eug. If that is the caſe, I have indeed been much deceived, but if I am not greatly miſtaken, it is preſented to the world in a very different point of view.——I think the publiſher expreſly ſays, "that his L—ſhip, in order to accompliſh the end he had in view in giving his ſon the means of inſtruction, was ever anxious to fix in him a ſcrupulous adherence to the ſtricteſt morality, and to lay in him in the earlieſt period of life, a firm foundation in good principles and ſound religion;" with this idea the Letters are warmly recommended as containing a ſyſtem of education, which may be extremely uſeful to the community.

Con. The Editor has indeed ſaid all this, and though a Lady, I muſt obſerve, with very little

regard either to truth or modeſty; whether her deſign in doing ſo, was tinctured with ſelfiſh motives, or has proceeded from thoſe kind wiſhes to her country for which ſhe expreſſes ſo affectionate a regard, I believe the candid will find themſelves at no loſs to determine. Nor does it require more diſcernment to pronounce, that the reſcuing theſe Letters from oblivion, to which it is ſaid his L—p had conſigned them, reflects much diſcredit on the memory of their noble author, inſtead of adding luſtre to his reputation. —You will probably think that this remark is not very agreeable to the good-natured maxim, "*de mortuis nil niſi bonum*;" I muſt confeſs it is not; but when an attack is made upon that which is the diſtinguiſhing glory and excellence of human nature, ſilence would be unpardonable; here the political abilities, the graces and admired accompliſhments of a Cheſterfield ſhould be no protection to him. For this reaſon I have thought it very ſtrange, that no perſon properly qualified for the office, and animated with the love of virtue, religion and his country, has yet (as far as my information reaches) ſtepped forth to place before the public the tendency of his Letters in their native colours. As I find you ſtand in need of my aſſiſtance in this reſpect, I will take the firſt opportunity to enter with you more particularly on the ſubject. In the mean time I will carefully examine the Letters in queſtion,

queſtion, that I may be able to place before you in proper order the exceptionable parts of them; do you likewiſe read them again with attention, that you may be the better prepared to advance what can be ſaid in defence of your author. You know I have taught you to ſpeak your thoughts without reſerve, and in our inquiries after truth, left you at perfect liberty to judge for yourſelf. On the preſent occaſion you ſhall enjoy all theſe privileges in their utmoſt extent. Our converſations on this ſubject I hope will not be unprofitable; I have no doubt but I ſhall be able to remove your miſtake with reſpect to L—d C——d's Letters, and the ſubject will naturally ſuggeſt to me ſome reflections which may tend to the improvement of your mind.

Eug. I ſhall moſt chearfully comply with your deſire.

DIALOGUE II.

CONSTANTIUS, EUGENIUS.

Con. DURING the interval of our more ſerious ſtudies, we have both had ſufficient time to reflect on our late converſation relating to

L—d Ch——d's Letters.—Agreeably to our mutual intention when we parted, I hope we are both prepared to reſume that ſubject, and to conſider it more minutely.

Eug. In obedience, Sir, to your commands, I have turned my thoughts with a great deal of attention to that matter, and ſhall with much pleaſure receive your farther inſtructions with reſpect to it.

Con. To begin then with what is by no means the leaſt weighty objection to the publication we are ſpeaking of; I look upon it to be unfavourable to the intereſts of religion; I hope you are now convinced of the truth of this.

Eug. I cannot ſay that I am, and for theſe reaſons, L—d Ch——d having obſerved to his ſon, that ſolid knowledge was the firſt and great foundation of his future fortune and character, ſays, * "I never mention to you the two much greater points, religion and morality, becauſe I cannot poſſibly ſuſpect you as to either of them." In another letter he writes to him thus, † "I have long ſince done mentioning your great, religious, and moral duties, becauſe I would not make your underſtanding ſo bad a compliment as to ſuppoſe that you wanted or could receive any new inſtruction on theſe two important points; Mr. Harte, I am ſure, has not neglected them, and

* 123 let. 2d vol. † 135 let. 2d vol.

and beſides, they are ſo obvious to common ſenſe and reaſon, that commentators may, as they often do perplex, but cannot make them clearer." —I cannot think that the following are the ſentiments of one unfriendly to religion.*—" When you happen to be in company with pretended *Eſprits forts*, or with thoughtleſs libertines, who laugh at religion to ſhew their wit, or diſclaim it to complete their riot, let no word or look of yours, intimate the leaſt approbation; on the contrary, let a ſilent gravity expreſs your diſlike." —Does not this alſo ſeem warmly to recommend the ſame ſentiments?† " What is the way then to arrive at that perfection which you promiſe me to aim at? It is firſt to do your duty towards God and man, without which every thing elſe ſignifies nothing."

Con. I find that his L—p is likely to have in you an able defender, which will lead me to diſcuſs his Letters with a particular attention, that will place them in a more clear and ſatisfactory light.—I believe there is ſcarcely an expreſſion in them, in appearance favourable to religion, except thoſe you have now mentioned.—Let us ſee then what we are to conclude from them.—The noble author here tells his ſon that religion was a point of greater importance than any of thoſe, concerning which he gave him a multitude

* 180 let. 2d vol. † 69 let. 1ſt vol.

of inſtructions, and that on his ſeeing it turned into ridicule at any time, or diſclaimed, he ought to teſtify the greateſt diſpleaſure.—He ſays that religion or the diſcharge of his duty to God, was abſolutely neceſſary to his arriving at perfection, and that without it every thing elſe ſignified nothing.—Strange! that he ſhould acknowledge religion to be of ſuch importance, and yet tell him that he would not mention it to him! That during the courſe of ſeveral years conſtant and regular correſpondence with him, he ſhould give him but four or five hints concerning it!

Eug. But you know he gives reaſons for this, one of which is that he cannot poſſibly ſuſpect his ſon of being deficient in that point, and therefore thinks it unneceſſary to give him repeated inſtructions concerning it.

Con. And why ſhould he be ſo ſecure of him with reſpect to religion as to think that frequent advices relating to it were not at all neceſſary? Did not his L—p know that his youth, his ſtation in the world, the bad examples which on all hands ſurrounded him, expoſed him in this particular to a multitude of temptations? To adorn him with the graces, and every external accompliſhment, is what perpetually engages his attention; he gives him in his Letters ten thouſand inſtructions to qualify him for ſhining in the polite world with elegance and dignity; and yet ſhews almoſt a perfect indifference to inſpire him with

with a regard to religion, without which he declares that all ſuch ornaments would ſignify nothing.—How ſhall we account for this ſtriking inconſiſtence on the ſuppoſition that his L—p was really ſincere, when he recommended religion to his ſon, as the foundation of all other perfections?—Had he indeed thought it a matter of ſuch infinite conſequence, he would have embraced every opportunity in his Letters to Mr. Stanhope, of reoommending it warmly to his eſteem, and of promoting his improvement in it.

Eug. Theſe reflections, which appear to be juſt, did not before occur to me; but I muſt obſerve, that beſides the reaſon we have been ſpeaking of, there is another which L—d Ch——d gives, for not writing to his ſon more particularly on the ſubject of religion, and that is, he takes it for granted that his Tutor, whoſe office as a clergyman particularly qualified him for the diſcharge of ſuch a duty, would take due pains to inſtruct him in that matter.

Con. Very true; but this can by no means juſtify him; for allowing that his L——p was much better fitted to direct his ſon, with reſpect to all the graceful accompliſhments, as no doubt he was, is it natural to imagine that had he been perſuaded that his being adorned with religion, was of ſuch moment, that compared with it all other qualifications were of no conſequence, he would himſelf have been ſo ſilent on the point,

and left his improvement in it entirely to the diſcretion of his tutor? Were his L——p ever ſo well convinced that Mr. Harte would take all poſſible care of his ſon with reſpect to that matter, he was too well acquainted with his own powers of perſuaſion not to know that his advice on a ſubject, which he himſelf acknowledged to be of infinite importance, muſt have had much greater influence.—The obligations to religion being plain, was ſo far from rendering it unneceſſary in him properly to enforce a regard to them, that this ſhould have led to the contrary concluſion.——Becauſe a duty is very plain, therefore it is very important, and the omiſſion of it very criminal; conſequently, in particular, if there are many temptations to the neglect of it, the practice of it ſhould be more warmly and frequently recommended.——Theſe obſervations however only afford a preſumptive evidence of his L——p's indifference with reſpect to religion. But I have much more on this point to accuſe him of.—Do you imagine, if the mind is at all animated with a becoming regard for the Deity, it will indulge itſelf in awful appeals to Heaven, and break out into ſolemn exclamations about matters of a trifling nature, ſuch as his ſon coming awkwardly into a room, diſcovering any impropriety in his manner of ſpeaking, or in the little minutiæ of good breeding, and things of the like kind, and yet we frequently

ly meet with theſe in the Letters we are ſpeaking of. What do you think of this ſentiment?* "Nature, thank God, has given you all the powers neceſſary, and if ſhe has not yet, I hope in God ſhe will give you the will of exerting them."—The bleſſed powers of his off-ſpring which our Author here ſpeaks of, and for which he is ſo heartily thankful to his Maker, are thoſe engaging graces which would not only render him agreeable in general, but enable him to deceive, by the artful wiles of diſſimulation, every man he ſhould meet with, and to corrupt the virtue of every woman, when he ſhould find it conducive either to his pleaſure or his intereſt.—I would aſk whether the human mind can poſſibly conceive an inſtance of more licentious impiety?—In the ſixty-firſt Letter of the firſt volume, his L—p having expreſſed his hearty wiſhes that Mr. Stanhope had ſtaid long enough at Manheim to have been ſeriouſly and deſperately in love with a married lady, a Madame de Taxis, and obſerved that he lived in hopes that ſome one or other would excite ſuch a paſſion in him, adds, "your hour may not yet be come, but it will come."—Could a mind poſſeſſed of the leaſt ſentiment of piety thus wantonly apply an alluſion to an expreſſion in ſcripture made uſe of on a moſt ſolemn and affecting occaſion?—What ſhall

* 74th let. 1ſt vol.

ſhall we ſay of the pains which his L—p took, not only to make his ſon violate ſeveral very eſſential duties commanded by religion, but alſo to think with perfect indifference of ſome of its important obligations? Beſides, it appears that Mr. Stanhope was ſubject to a diſorder which reduced him at laſt to a deſperate ſtate; this, my L—d frequently mentions to him without giving him the leaſt hint of religion, even when he muſt have plainly ſeen that there were little hopes of his life: Had he thought that there was any thing real in religion, was it not moſt natural for him to have taken notice of it to him when he was in circumſtances, that in ſo many reſpects required its aſſiſtance? I have only another obſervation to make on this point which relates to the books L—d Ch———d ſpeaks of with approbation.—Of *Voltaire* he ſays, *nil molitur inepte.* So then his many and various attempts to undermine the evidence of the Chriſtian religion has with the reſt of his works, his L—p's very favourable opinion, for had theſe been at all offenſive to him, he certainly would have ſaid ſo.—Lord Bolingbroke who embarked in the ſame cauſe of infidelity, is likewiſe warmly recommended by him. —The eſſays of David Hume have in like manner received from him very high applauſe; an Author, whoſe ſhining abilities, had they been properly directed, would have placed him among the firſt rank of our moſt admired writers; but

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you know his character, that by plunging with unbounded licence into the dark and joyleſs labyrinths of ſcepticiſm, and by the uſe of the moſt ſubtle and abſtracted ſpeculations, he has laboured not only to deſtroy chriſtianity, but our belief of the ſoul's immortality, and of the exiſtence, perfections, and providence of God. Other ſceptics have guarded their ſentiments, and expreſſed themſelves with ſome degree of diffidence and reſerve; but Mr. Hume has thrown off the maſk, has laid the ax at once to the root of the tree, and attempted effectually to demoliſh the very firſt principles of religion, and yet he is ſo happy as to be honoured with L—d C———d's hearty approbation. He is one of thoſe unerring guides who is to inſpire his ſon with religious ſentiments, without which, according to his own ideas, every thing elſe can ſignify nothing in order to his arriving at perfection.

Eug. It plainly appears to me that his conduct in this particular cannot be juſtified.

Con. It is impoſſible. To praiſe an Author is ſo far to adopt his ſentiments.—Suppoſe that L—d Ch———d found it neceſſary to recommend theſe books, for their eloquence, the elegance of their ſtyle, and the uſeful knowledge they contain on a variety of points, but that he diſapproved of their principles with regard to religion, when he ſpoke of them to his ſon, would

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he not have ſaid ſo? Would he not have warned him of the danger, and endeavoured with prudent caution to guard him from it? I well remember a particular Letter in which he tells Mr. Stanhope that Lord Bolingbroke was a deiſt, and doubted of the immortality of the ſoul; had he at all wiſhed that his ſon ſhould not adopt ſuch ſentiments, could he have been ſilent on the ſubject, and not thought it a very proper occaſion to declare his own belief of the Chriſtian religion, and perſuaſion of a ſtate of future exiſtence? Had theſe writers ſaid any thing that might have miſled him with reſpect to elocution, addreſs, or any of the graceful accompliſhments, would he have been as ſilent on that point? No; he would have ſet a mark upon it, and cenſured it with the utmoſt warmth of expreſſion.—I hope, Eugenius, theſe remarks have ſufficiently opened your eyes with reſpect to this part of our inquiry?

Eug. I can aſſure you they have, Sir.—

Con. It gives me pleaſure to hear it. You know that ſince the care of your education was firſt committed to me, it has been a principal object of my attention to impreſs your mind with juſt ſentiments of religion. I have ſtudied to explain to you the nature and perfections of that glorious and eternal Being who is the object of it, and taught you the infinite obligations you

are under to reſpect and venerate him: As my labours with you in this noble cauſe have not been in vain, and your improvements with relation to it have correſponded to my wiſhes, had you been injured in this reſpect by the Letters which are the ſubject of our converſation, it would have given me very ſenſible concern.

Eug. I know it would Sir, and ſincerely thank you for your friendſhip.— The pains you have beſtowed upon my education lay me under the moſt laſting obligations. — You have been the means of convincing my underſtanding of the reality and importance of religion; and I hope a high eſteem and affection for it will ever warm and animate my heart. — But there is one thing I am much at a loſs about, why any Author ſhould attempt to deſtroy the foundations of religion.

Con. As to the publication of L—d Ch——d's Letters, ſo far as they are chargeable with this, he, as I mentioned before, is no way accountable for it; the world owes this obligation to his Editor. — In reſpect to thoſe writers I have been ſpeaking of, and others of the ſame claſs, who have endeavoured to injure religion, it is very difficult to aſſign a motive for their conduct. — It is too evident that in this inſtance they muſt have quite diveſted themſelves of benevolence; for religion is one of the moſt powerful bonds

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by which mankind are united; it preſents the mind with a variety of conſiderations which are the ſtrongeſt incentives to the practice of virtue, without which, ſociety could not poſſibly ſubſiſt. The conviction of the immortality of the ſoul, and of the exiſtence of an omnipotent, all pure and juſt Being, the Creator and Governor of the univerſe, deters from the commiſſion of vice, and animates to the diſcharge of every moral duty. The deiſt attempts to weaken the force of theſe truths, and the atheiſt utterly to annihilate them.——The tendency of their writings is to degrade the dignity of man, to render him a much leſs reſpectable being in the ſcale of exiſtence; it is to deſtroy thoſe noble objects which enlarge his underſtanding, refine and elevate his affections, and kindle in his ſoul the moſt generous and exalted ambition; it is to rob him of a ſource of the ſweeteſt and moſt delightful enjoyment, which gives him a lively reliſh of the pleaſures of life, caſts an agreeable light over all his proſpects, and inſpires him with comfort and conſolation in the day of adverſity. Their inducements then to propogate ſuch opinions are neither amiable nor honourable. How then ſhall we explain them? Perhaps in this way. Some of them were of licentious morals, and attacked religious truth to render their character more conſiſtent in the eyes of mankind,

and quiet the accuſations of conſcience. Others have acted in the ſame manner to ſhew their ingenuity, and that they might be ſpoken of in the world as the inventors of ſomething new and ſurpriſing.—Wonderful things have been done to acquire fame; you remember the ſtory of the man who burned the celebrated temple of Diana at Epheſus, that his name might be handed down to poſterity with the remembrance of that execrable deed.——But I can ſtay no longer with you at preſent, to-morrow we will reſume the ſubject.

DIALOGUE III.

CONSTANTIUS, EUGENIUS.

Con. HAVING conſidered theſe celebrated Letters ſo far as they relate to religion, let us next take a view of his L—p's ſentiments with reſpect to virtue. This part of our enquiry calls for a minute diſcuſſion, as there is nothing for which they are more juſtly cenſurable than the looſe morals they contain.

Con.

Eug. If this is the caſe, he is certainly the moſt unaccountable author in the world; for if we judge from a variety of his expreſſions, it appears to me that the cauſe of virtue never had a warmer advocate. I have collected ſeveral of them, and with your permiſſion will lay them before you.

Con. Proceed.

Eug. As an inducement to Mr. Stanhope to ſtudy hiſtory with attention, his L—p obſerves, that it * animates and excites to the love of virtue by ſhewing us the regard and veneration with which it has ever been treated. He ſhews how much the moderation and equanimity of the old Romans, ſuch as Curius, Scipio, and Fabricius, have been admired: "Such ſays he, are the rewards that always crown virtue, and ſuch the characters you ſhould imitate." Have not the following ſentiments the ſame tendency?† "The ambition of a man of ſenſe and honour is to be diſtinguiſhed by the reputation of knowledge, truth and virtue." "Much rather die than do a baſe and criminal action."‡ "Let no quibbles of lawyers, no refinements of caſuiſtry break into the plain notions of right and wrong; to do as you would be done by, is the plain, ſure, and indiſputable rule of morality; ſtick to that, and be convinced that whatever breaks into it in any

* 35th let. 1ſt vol. † 50th l. 1ſt vol. ‡ 13th l. 2d l.

any degree, however ſpeciouſly it may be turned, notwithſtanding is falſe in itſelf, unjuſt and criminal."§ "The ſure character of a ſound and ſtrong mind is to find in every thing thoſe certain bounds, *quos ultra nequit conſiſtere rectum*; theſe bounds are marked out by a very fine line, keep it always in your eye and learn to walk upon it."

Con. Have you any more paſſages of the ſame kind?

Eug. I have Sir.—Are not the following clearly expreſſive of the different qualities of virtue and vice?* "Vice in its true light is ſo deformed, that it ſhocks us at firſt ſight, and would hardly ever ſeduce us if it did not at firſt wear the maſk of ſome virtue."—† "Let your company ſhine ever ſo bright, their vices, if they have any, are ſo many ſpots which you would no more imitate, than you would make an artificial wart upon your face."‡—"Virtue is in itſelf ſo beautiful, that it charms us at firſt ſight, and engages us more and more on farther acquaintance."—Beſides thoſe I have mentioned there are other Letters wherein the importance and advantages of virtue are finely illuſtrated.

Con. Produce them.

Eug. § "Virtue gives an inward comfort which nothing elſe can.—Riches and greatneſs may

§ 142d let. 2d vol. * 110th let. 1ſt vol. † 133d l. 2d vol. ‡ 110th l. 2d. vol. § 54th l. 1ſt vol.

may be torn from us, ſickneſs may deprive us of the pleaſures of the body, but nothing can deprive us of virtue."—" If a man has acquired riches and power by evil means, he cannot enjoy them, becauſe his conſcience will torment him both day and night; whereas let a virtuous man be ever ſo poor or unfortunate in the world, ſtill his virtue is its own reward, and will comfort him under all his afflictions; he is delighted with his own reflections, and is eſteemed, reſpected, and admired by the world."* —My tenderneſs for you makes me think more of the manner than the length of your life, and forbids me to wiſh it prolonged by a ſingle day, that ſhould bring guilt, reproach, and ſhame upon you."—" Your moral character muſt be not only pure, but like Cæſar's wife, unſuſpected; the leaſt ſpeck or blemiſh upon it is fatal."†—" A man who does not ſolidly eſtabliſh, and really deſerve a character of truth, good manners, and good morals at his firſt ſetting out in the world, may impoſe and ſhine like a meteor for a very ſhort time, but will very ſoon vaniſh, and be extinguiſhed with contempt."‡ —On which account he entreats him not only to keep his own mind unſullied, but warmly exhorts him to be on all occaſions the advocate, the friend of virtue, and to treat every breach

* 179th let. 2d vol. † 180th l. 2d vol. ‡ 5th l. 2d vol.

breach of morality in others with deteſtation and abhorrence.

Con. The moſt ſtrenuous advocate for L—d Ch———d could not find any paſſages in his Letters ſeemingly more favourable to him on the preſent point than thoſe you have collected: Now I ſuppoſe, Eugenius, you certainly conclude from them, that my remark with reſpect to the looſeneſs of his morals, is without any foundation.

Eug. Had not our late converſation taught me to be more cautious in my judgment on this ſubject, I ſhould undoubtedly be inclined to think ſo.

Con. I am not at all ſurpriſed at it, for the precepts and reflections you have taken notice of appear to expreſs the moſt nice and delicate taſte for virtue, with a lively perſuaſion of its excellence and the ineſtimable advantages which attend it. Had he meant that the general terms they are conveyed in, ſhould be underſtood in their ſtrict and common acceptation, and had the other parts of his Letters been conſiſtent with them, he would deſervedly be placed among the higheſt claſs of thoſe diſtinguiſhed moraliſts, whoſe generous endeavours in the cauſe of virtue, have handed down their memories with honour to poſterity.—Then indeed the pen of the critic or hiſtorian, in giving a character of his work, would not be dipped in the gall of ſatire, but chearfully employed in drawing his grateful and honourable

honourable panegyric.—Thus to be inſpired by the ambition of being honoured with the reputation of knowledge, truth and virtue; to be animated by the glorious reſolution of dying, rather than commit a baſe or criminal action; to have the mind pure and uncontaminated, and to look upon every kind of vice, every breach of morality with contempt and deteſtation, if the words truth, purity, virtue, vice are taken in their natural and proper ſignification, is to be adorned with every thing that can render human nature amiable, lovely, and exalted. — Ingenuity, elegance, the moſt graceful powers of perſuaſion exerted in forming ſuch a character, and extending their general influence to mankind, would demand from the world a tribute of gratitude and the higheſt approbation. — But alas! theſe generous feelings of the heart have nothing to excite them on the preſent occaſion: for thoſe ſtriking ſentiments you have mentioned, are ſo far from meriting our eſteem, that they are perhaps the moſt dangerous part of the whole publication.

Eug. You ſurpriſe me, Sir, exceedingly, how can that poſſibly be the caſe?

Con. I will tell you. There is nothing in the whole compaſs of nature ſo deteſtable as vice; when no pains are taken to conceal its native ugline ſs and deformity, we view it with diſguſt, unleſs our minds have taken a wrong turn, and our moral taſte is corrupted by the habitual gratification

cation of ſome criminal paſſion.—Hence the looſe morals of L—d Ch———d would by no means have ſo pernicious a tendency, were they not palliated by theſe ſtrong expreſſions he makes uſe of in favour of virtue.—When he tells you that vice in its true light is ſo deformed, that it ſhocks us at firſt ſight; that the man who commits it, is continually tormented by the upbraidings of his conſcience, and expoſes himſelf to reproach, infamy and contempt; when he aſſures us that virtue is itſelf ſo beautiful, that it inſtantly charms us on beholding it, that it is its own reward, our comfort under afflictions, a ſolid, a permanent good, and a means of rendering us eſteemed, reſpected, and admired by the world; we cannot poſſibly think that he would attempt to recommend the one, or to leſſen our regard and veneration for the other. This is the maſk, to ſpeak his own language, by which we are ſeduced, that puts us off our guard, and ſo engages us in his favour, that we are much more ſuſceptible of his infectious poiſon.—Appeal to the feelings of your own mind for the truth of this.—Aſk yourſelf whether there are not many inſtructions which his L—p gives his ſon, that would have appeared to you much more exceptionable, had it not been for the reaſon I have mentioned.

Eug. This is placing the ſubject in a light which I muſt own I had no conception of. I well

well recollect there were ſeveral advices in the Letters which had not my entire approbation, at leaſt I was not quite clear about them, but I did not conſider them with particular attention, and I believe it is true, it was owing to my not ſuſpecting of unbecoming ſentiments an author, who in many places hath expreſſed himſelf ſo much to my ſatisfaction with reſpect to virtue.

Con. Thoſe advices would at once have appeared to you in their proper light; but the caſe is the ſame with you as I am afraid it has been with many of his readers; you have found yourſelf inclined to explain his L—p's inſtructions to his ſon on particular points, by his general declarations relating to morality, rather, than to explain his general precepts on that ſubject by his particular ſentiments.—The former method is quite fallacious, the latter the only one in ſuch matters of finding out the truth.—Uſe your own reflection for a moment, and you will be at no loſs to determine.—If I ſay that purity is a grace of intrinſic beauty and excellence, but allow you freely in any circumſtance to indulge an irregular paſſion, if I aſſert that truth is one of the firſt of virtues, and tell you at the ſame time that if it will ſerve your own intereſt, there is nothing improper in the uſe of cunning diſingenuous arts; in what manner will you judge of my opinions? You ſee if you aſſert, on account of my general principles, that an inſtance of licentious gratifica-

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tion is not impurity, and that an act of wilful hypocrisy is not inconsistent with truth, you will draw a very wrong conclusion; but if from the liberty I allow you in these particulars, you determine that I have false notions of the nature of purity and truth, you think perfectly right.—As a key to explain to you L—d C———d's morality, I will lay before you on the next occasion, his sentiments with respect to the foundation of virtue, at present we must turn our attention to other matters.

DIALOGUE IV.

CONSTANTIUS, EUGENIUS.

Con. AS this is a convenient opportunity, I will now Eugenius, according to my promiſe, lay before you L—d Ch——d's ideas with reſpect to the foundation of virtue. It is neceſſary you ſhould have a diſtinct notion of this, for it is the corrupt muddy fountain, that has produced thoſe immoral ſentiments, which are exceedingly diſguſting and offenſive to every mind poſſeſſed of the leaſt refinement or delicacy of taſte.

Eug. I ſhall be much pleaſed to hear you explain yourſelf particularly on that point.

Con. His L—p ſpeaking of Monſieur de la Rochefoucault ſays,* "I know he is blamed, but I think without reaſon, for deriving all our actions from the ſource of ſelf-love; for my own part I ſee a great deal of truth, and no harm at all in that opinion." In this manner he ſupports his aſſertion, in which you perceive that ingenuity and inſinuating addreſs for which he was on all occaſions ſo remarkably diſtinguiſhed.—"It

* 129th let. 1ſt vol.

" It is certain we ſeek our own happineſs in every thing we do, and it is as certain that we can only find it in doing well, and in conforming in all our actions to the rule of right reaſon, which is the great law of nature.—It is only a miſtaken ſelf love that is a blameable motive, when we take the immediate and indiſcriminate gratification of a paſſion or appetite for real happineſs.—But am I blameable if I do a good action upon account of the happineſs which that honeſt conſciouſneſs will give me? Surely not. —On the contrary that pleaſing conſciouſneſs is a proof of my virtue.—Give me but virtuous actions and I will not quibble and chicane about the motives; and I will give any body their choice of theſe two truths, which amount to the ſame thing, he who loves himſelf beſt is the honeſteſt man, or the honeſteſt man loves himſelf beſt." —Our author frequently applauds, and recommends the Duke de Rochefoucault, with whom the opinion now mentioned concerning the ſpring of human actions, was a leading principle.—In one Letter he ſays, " would you know men read la Rochefoucault."—Mr. Hume likewiſe, formerly taken notice of, as one of his L—p's favourite writers, traces up virtue to the ſame ſource. —The characters of la Bruyere, an author of the ſame ſtamp, are likewiſe greatly applauded by him.

Eug. I have not perhaps conſidered theſe matters with due attention, but I cannot help thinking that ſelf-love is a very ſtrong and powerful principle in the human mind. Nature prompts me to avoid whatever diſturbs my enjoyment, ſhe invariably animates me to purſue thoſe objects that contribute to my pleaſure; and ſure you will not condemn me for thinking that one of the firſt and nobleſt of theſe is a conſciouſneſs of virtue, and that a proſpect of obtaining it, is not an unworthy motive of action.

Con. I cannot poſſibly blame either you or L—d Ch———d for thinking that much pleaſure ariſes from the conſciouſneſs of virtue, as alſo that ſelf-love, or a cool deſire of happineſs, is a ſtrong affection of the human mind—The pleaſures of virtue are the moſt elegant, the moſt refined and exalted of any of the ſources of good, which give joy and ſatisfaction to the heart of man.—And as to ſelf-love, the circumſtances of our being make it quite neceſſary that it ſhould operate with conſiderable force.—The inſtincts, as well as the cool deſire of happineſs implanted in our nature, are all proper in order to our attaining that perfection deſigned us by the author of our exiſtence: But then, becauſe virtue gives pleaſure, ſhall we ſay that the proſpect of that pleaſure is our only inducement to the practice of it, or that morality has no ſupport, no animating ſpring but the ſelfiſh affections? The man of

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the world who wiſhes to gratify all his inclinations, and to ſhine amidſt the outward glitter and parade of life, may with L—d Ch———d be of ſuch ſentiments, but let the pure, the genuine deciſions of nature be your guide, and what will they lead you to? When you behold your fellow-creature in diſtreſs, is it ſelf-love, is it a deſire to promote your own happineſs, that bedews your cheek with the ſympathetic tear, and animates you to fly to his relief? No, your diſintereſted benevolence is the cauſe of this exerciſe of your compaſſion.—If we really ſeek our own good in every thing we do, then it evidently follows that we do nothing, until we clearly ſee that it conduces to that end; but are there not ten thouſand inſtances to perſuade us to the contrary? The advocates for certain principles may by the help of metaphyſical refinements, warp, they may twiſt the feelings of the mind, and force the appearances of nature into a conformity with their opinion.—But *Naturam furcâ expellas, tamen uſque recurret.*—There is not a man who muſt not be convinced by a multitude of irreſiſtible facts, that he is impelled by an original law of his conſtitution to exert himſelf when an opportunity is preſented, merely with no other view than to alleviate the diſtreſs or promote the well-being of others.—When he does ſo, in proportion to the good he has been the author of, he is conſcious to ſenſations of pure and exalted de-

light; but then this pleaſure is a conſequence, by no means the actuating ſpring of his benevolence. — Well Eugenius, what do you think of my doctrine?

Eug. From my preſent view of it, I cannot withold my aſſent from it.

Con. I am glad of it, but I have not yet done, I have other illuſtrations of the error of this opinion of our author. — If ſelf-love is the principle of virtue, and the ſpring of all our actions, why does the benevolence of thoſe who have lived in ages and countries, widely remote from our own, command our lively and affectionate approbation? Why do we read of the noble efforts in the cauſe of liberty and their country, of a Camillus, a Scipio, or an Ariſtides, with ſuch warm and ardent feelings of eſteem? On what account is it that his L——p tells us that ſuch exalted characters are the objects of our veneration? Is the patriotiſm of Camillus, of Scipio, and Ariſtides, any thing to us? How does it gratify our ſelf-love, or contribute to our private advantage? Nay what is ſtill more ſtrange, more difficult to be accounted for on his principles; had L—d C———d lived in the days of theſe heroes, had he been a Gaul, a citizen of Carthage, or a ſoldier in the army of Xerxes, where he would have found their virtue to be oppoſite to the intereſt of his country, he would have reſpected and admired it. — Such men,

men, as well as others, are themſelves on many occaſions compelled to expoſe the falſehood of their ſpeculative opinions.—* Was his L—p conſcious of nothing within himſelf, that might have taught him to entertain more noble and exalted ſentiments of the conſtitution of his mind? —Did the voice of the generous affections there never vindicate their cauſe? On receiving an obligation, did not his breaſt glow with lively ſenſations of gratitude to his kind benefactor? Was he never delighted with the ſweet and engaging ſenſibilities of friendſhip? Or did he withold more than other men, his tribute of tender anxiety and condolence on beholding a pitiable object? Could he bring himſelf to think that theſe feelings had nothing in them of the generous and diſintereſted? Muſt they be ſtripped of all their beauty and reſolved into ſelfiſh principles? Yes, they muſt, and we are required to give our aſſent to theſe two maxims, which he is pleaſed to call truths, "he who loves himſelf beſt is the honeſteſt man, or the honeſteſt man loves himſelf beſt."—They both follow from his ſcheme, and are equally deluſive and unjuſt.—For the expreſſion here *honeſteſt* is pre-

* Thus Cicero obſerves that the anxious concern which Epicurus diſcovered for his friends and relatives in framing his laſt will, was a convincing proof of the fallacy of his ſelfiſh notions, with reſpect to the nature and foundation of virtue.

ciſely equivalent to the moſt virtuous.—Now he who loves himſelf beſt in L—d Ch———d's ſenſe, who conſiders it as a law of his nature to be invariably guided by the ſelfiſh affections, wraps himſelf up within the circle of his own little private concerns, and is utterly incapable of thoſe noble and generous exertions, without which he cannot have the leaſt pretenſions to that exalted character.—Neither does the honeſteſt, the moſt virtuous man, love himſelf beſt; farther than as prudence makes it neceſſary, he loſeth ſight of ſo ſmall an object, reſtrains every contracted deſire, lays open his breaſt to the power of a manly extenſive benevolence, and makes it his delight, the glorious object of his ambition, to be kind, friendly, and uſeful to all, who come within his influence.

Eug. Such a character is no doubt exceedingly amiable: But ſtill I cannot think that L—d Ch———d is ſo blameable for holding the principle we were ſpeaking of, for though he is perſuaded that ſelf-love is the foundation of virtue, yet he ſays that the object of it, our own happineſs, is only to be found in doing well, in refuſing to gratify our paſſions indiſcriminately, and in conforming all our actions to the rule of right reaſon.—Now if this motive of his is ſufficient to engage us to act a worthy part, is it of any real conſequence to virtue, though it ſhould differ from yours?

Con.

Con. Yes, it is of infinite conſequence to it; for do you not ſee that this robs virtue of all its dignity, of all that intrinſic lovelineſs, which renders it the glory of humanity and the nobleſt ornament of that exalted Being, who is the uncreated ſource of beauty and excellence.— Conſider it in this light, and what can you perceive in it to excite your eſteem and admiration, and to captivate your heart? If this principle is juſt, then virtue is no longer deſirable for her own ſake; and they who with heroic magnanimity, have ſuffered a variety of diſtreſſing ills rather than forfeit their integrity, have acted a moſt abſurd and fooliſh part.—But were it indeed unneceſſary, that virtue ſhould have any thing in it of inherent excellence, in order to engage us to obey her dictates; were that prevalence of the ſelfiſh deſires that ſtrips her of all her native charms, and reduces her to a lifeleſs unattracting form, ſufficient to regulate our paſſions, and to engage us to act the part required of us as intelligent and moral beings, our author might have enjoyed his opinion with very little oppoſition from me; but you will find that this is far from being the caſe; for when we adopt the principle that a deſire of our own private enjoyment is to be the only guide of our actions, whatever we may talk in theory concerning their conformity to reaſon, and the impropriety of irregular indulgence, on our reducing this opinion to practice

amidſt the various objects of deſire and temptations that ſurround us, we find that it becomes a ready advocate for the weakneſs of our nature, and is eaſily prevailed with to give its ſanction to the intemperate gratifications of our paſſions. The occaſion of pleaſure is preſented, our inclinations are excited, why, ſays ſelf-love, reſiſt the impulſe of nature? Why ſubmit to the pain of uneaſy reſtraint? That we ſhould do ſo is the language of aſcetic fools who know not the enjoyments of life; indulge then freely, it is your happineſs, your chief good. — Thus the checks of conſcience are quieted, vice loſeth its deformity, and no ſmall power is added to the depravity and corruption of the human heart. — On the other hand when virtue, whether in diſpoſitions or actions, is conſidered as poſſeſſed in itſelf of amiable and engaging qualities, but vice of thoſe which are ugly and deformed, unſuitable to the dignity and perfection of every intelligent nature, and that thoſe qualities are perceived by a faculty originally implanted in the mind, to be a judge of our behaviour, juſt as the external ſentences are given us, to point out and diſtinguiſh their ſeveral objects, then we have a fixed and permanent ſtandard, which is quite independent of all our falſe views and prejudices, to regulate our conduct, to controul our appetites, and direct us to a manner of life, ſuitable to the important ends of our exiſtence — I have

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thus far on this point, out of complaiſance to his L——p, ſpoken as if I thought that he really believed there was a foundation for virtue, and only condemned the principle from which he derived it; but I will now throw off every ſemblance of diſguiſe, and hope to convince you, that in what he ſays of ſelf-love, he immediately becomes an apologiſt for vice.

Eug. If you do, I ſhall be no longer his apologiſt.

Con. The firſt in thoſe modern times who taught the ſyſtem of ſelf-love was la Rochefoucault; the opinions which he taught with reſpect to that matter, fully explained and traced to their conſequences, were of a very licentious nature, tending to deſtroy all real diſtinction betwixt virtue and vice: Theſe ſentiments as I have told you, L—d Ch———d embraced, not as a ſpeculative philoſopher, in which ſenſe he might have done ſo, and yet from the power of nature been virtuous in principle and practice, but with a view to regulate his conduct through life.—It was not his maxim that he ſhould do any particular action, becauſe it was required of him by a moral law, but becauſe in doing it he received pleaſure from it; ſuppoſe it to be the gratification of a criminal appetite, provided it did not deſtroy his health, or injure his character in the faſhionable world, therefore it was virtuous; which you perceive was confounding eve-

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ry idea of virtue, and uſing with the moſt licentious and unhallowed profanation, that venerable word.—This idea plainly appears in a remarkable expreſſion of his, I before mentioned to you.—"Give me, ſays he, but virtuous actions, and I will not quibble and chicane about the motives." Have his words here, *virtuous actions*, any meaning? They can have none that are decent and becoming. Actions cannot be virtuous, unleſs they proceed from worthy motives; but what the motives are to any action, or the intentions from which it is performed, he directly inſinuates are of no conſequence, does it not therefore follow according to him that virtue has no foundation? That it was his opinion that there are no fixed and permanent laws of virtue is farther evident from what he ſays in one of his Letters to his friends.—"Are not moſt of us, he aſkes, beholden for our virtue to particular circumſtances and accidental cauſes? As for me, I have humility to own, and were I to tell you the whole truth, ſelf-experience to confirm it."*—Had his L——p thought that there was a proviſion made for virtue in the original frame and conſtitution of the mind, he would have aſcribed every virtuous action to this, as an invariable cauſe, and not to one merely accidental, or to any particular circumſtance.—A particular circumſtance

* Letter at the end of 2d vol.

cumſtance may give occaſion to the exerciſe of good diſpoſitions, but cannot be the original ſpring of any ſuch action in the opinion of any one who entertains proper ſentiments of the nature of virtue.— The obſervations I have now made with reſpect to his L——p's principles, will appear perfectly juſt to any one who will read his Letters with unprejudiced candour.— What is the view which he gives of the ruling motives of his own conduct? Is it not entirely the ſame with the account given us of the nature of virtue by thoſe celebrated philoſophers he admires, who when they throw off the maſk, and ſpeak their opinion without reſerve, trace it up to that reſpectable and honourable ſource, vanity and pride?

Speaking of himſelf, he ſays, *"that I had vanity to a prodigious degree, I fairly own, and what is more, I confeſs it without repentance, nay I am glad I had it; ſince if I had the good fortune to pleaſe in the world, it is to that powerful and active principle that I owe it—I began the world not with a bare deſire, but with an inſatiable thirſt, a rage of popularity, applauſe, and admiration; if this made me do ſome ſilly things on one hand, on the other hand it made me do almoſt all the right things that I did."— Here follows a catalogue of ſome of the right things

* 72d let. 2d vol.

things that he did from this motive, which appear exceedingly beautiful. "It made me attentive and civil to the women I diſliked and to the men I deſpiſed, in hopes of the applauſe of both; though I neither deſired, nor would I have accepted the favours of the one, nor the friendſhip of the other; I always dreſſed, talked, and looked my beſt; and I own was overjoyed whenever I perceived that by all three or any one of them, the company was pleaſed with me.—To men I talked whatever I thought would give them the beſt opinion of my parts, and to women what I was ſure would pleaſe them, flattery, gallantry and love.—Was not this a pretty mode of conduct?

Eug. I ſhould imagine, Sir, that a deſire to pleaſe, is not an unbecoming principle.—Would not our ſituation in life be much leſs agreeable, if we did not ſtudy to render ourſelves agreeable to thoſe with whom we are connected?

Con. I grant you that the world, in which we live has a right to our complaiſance; we owe this to mankind as a tribute to humanity, and find at the ſame time that it has always a tendency to promote our own enjoyment.—An affected ſtiffneſs and ſingularity in our manners, is not more unamiable in itſelf, than unpleaſing to our friends; and ſo far from being a mark of humility or ſelf-denial, of which it aſſumes the appearance, generally

nerally proceeds from pride.—There is a certain pliancy and conformity of behaviour to the particular taſte and inclination of thoſe we converſe with; there is an eaſe, an elegance and polite gentleneſs, in every thing we ſay and do, which is extremely engaging, and very well worth the attention of every man who is placed in a genteel ſtation in the world.—But then to rate theſe accompliſhments infinitely beyond their intrinſic value; to conſider them not merely as the innocent means of pleaſing, but to have an inſatiable thirſt to be admired and applauded on account of them; to be animated with a vain deſire of praiſe as a ruling principle which has for its object matters relating to politeneſs, dreſs and other external ornaments; nay, in order to gratify this paſſion, to comply with the inclination of others in things which are looked upon by the dictates of integrity with a generous indignation; do not you think, Eugenius, that there is an impropriety, a meanneſs in this, which any man, conſcious of the dignity of his nature, and poſſeſſed of becoming ſentiments, ought to be aſhamed of?

Eug. I moſt certainly do.—

Con. The love of virtue is the moſt honourable and glorious paſſion of the human ſoul: Of the different affections of the mind it deſervedly holds the firſt rank, with reſpect to dignity, and

the tendency it has to raiſe us to the higheſt degree of excellence and perfection.—Next to the love of virtue, our nobleſt deſire is that of obtaining the eſteem and approbation which flows from the practice of it: The difference between this latter feeling and vanity, is this; the one has for its object the good opinion of others for qualities which in themſelves are amiable and praiſe-worthy; the other is ambitious of it on account of what has no intrinſic excellence, of what has nothing in its own nature, to command our reſpect or eſteem, but which derives its entire value from faſhion, from things merely external, which, independent of the prevailing taſte, are perfectly trifling and inſignificant.—Such were the matters to which L—d Ch——d, ſo far as appears from his Letters, directed the whole bent of his mind, on which he ſets his heart and affections.—To be adorned with the graces; to ſhine as all accompliſhed in the gay and faſhionable world; to expreſs himſelf with eaſe and propriety; to acquire an inſinuating elegance of manner, in order to obtain praiſe and admiration; thoſe were the objects of his ardent purſuit.—Such in reſpect to theſe matters as he laboured to be himſelf, and really was in a ſuperior degree, he endeavours to make his ſon in all his advices to him. Had he, in the pains he took to inſpire him with vanity, kept within

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the common bounds of decency, and at the ſame time done every thing in his power, to corrupt his morals, to deprave and contaminate his heart, he would have much leſs excited the diſpleaſure of the virtuous part of mankind.—How far he hath done ſo, agreeably to his licentious principles, which I have attempted to explain, I will endeavour to convince you, the next opportunity we have of reſuming the ſubject.

DIALOGUE

DIALOGUE V.

CONSTANTIUS, EUGENIUS.

Con. SHALL we now, Eugenius, proceed with our reflections relating to L——d C———d's Letters?

Eug. It will be extremely agreeable to me. Our paſt converſations on that ſubject have been of much uſe to me, by teaching me the folly of forming a judgment of any matter before it is conſidered with proper attention.—With reſpect to the particulars you have already taken notice of, I am perfectly convinced that his L——p has not any juſt claim to my approbation; but I ſhall be glad to hear what you have farther to ſay on this point.—

Con. You remember I yeſterday pointed out to you L——d Ch———d's ſentiments, with relation to the nature of virtue: I ſhall at preſent give you a view of thoſe looſe morals, contained in his Letters, which are the proper fruits of them.—Human virtue is no doubt very imperfect. Men poſſeſſed of the beſt principles, frequently,

frequently, from the ſtrength of ſudden, unguarded paſſions, and the power of temptation, deviate from the ſtrict line of integrity, and fall into improprieties in conduct: But vice ſpringing from cool, from wilful and deliberate intention, argues the utmoſt depravity both of heart and underſtanding, and muſt ever excite our deteſtation.—I ſhall lay before you ſeveral paſſages in our Author, which I am convinced muſt irreſiſtibly excite in you this feeling.—* "May I be convinced that your pleaſures, whatever they be, will be confined within the circle of good company and people of faſhion; thoſe pleaſures I recommend to you, I will promote them, I will pay for them.—I confeſs the pleaſures of high life are not always ſtrictly philoſophical, and I believe a Stoic would blame my indulgence, but I am no Stoic though turned of fifty-five.—The gallantry of high life, though not ſtrictly juſtifiable, carries at leaſt no external marks of infamy about it, neither the heart or conſtitution is corrupted by it."—

† "The love of pleaſures, is extremely natural, and the enjoyment of them not unbecoming, but then the pleaſures of low life are all miſtaken, merely ſenſual and diſgraceful, whereas thoſe of high life, though poſſibly in themſelves, not more moral, are more delicate, more refined,

* 87th let. 2d vol. † 4th let. 2d vol.

refined, and in the common courſe of things not reckoned diſgraceful at all."—Are not theſe becoming ſentiments, Eugenius?

Eug. You have taught me to anſwer your queſtions with modeſty, and particularly not to underſtand his L—p's words in the ſenſe which they naturally expreſs; but I imagine that the enjoyment of more refined and delicate pleaſures, has nothing in it indecent.—

Con. Yes, very refined and delicate indeed! If thoſe pleaſures which our noble author here recommends to his ſon, as proper for him to indulge in, are more delicate and refined, if they are raiſed above ſuch as are ſenſual and diſgraceful, if they are not unbecoming, why are they not ſtrictly juſtifiable? Why are they not moral which he ſays they are not? Why ſhould they not be approved of by the ſincereſt friends of virtue and philoſophy? Is it not the exalted object of philoſophy, to raiſe the mind above pleaſures that are groſs, mean and ſenſual, and to inſpire it with the love of ſuch as are noble, refined, and ſuited to the dignity of our nature? But the truth of the matter is, his L——p uſes the words, *refined*, *delicate*, in a looſe, indeterminate ſenſe: He by no means intends they ſhould expreſs thoſe excellent ideas they are naturally fitted to convey.—Diſdaining thoſe ignoble reſtraints which fetter the generality of mankind, he levels all diſtinctions.—Indulgence

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neither moral not juſtifiable, does not it ſeems corrupt the heart.—If the pleaſures which his ſon enjoys, are confined within the circle of good company and the faſhion, he will pay for them, he will promote them, whatever they be.—And why not? Are not good company and the faſhion, an admirable ſtandard of right and wrong? Are not ſuch judges excellently well qualified to preſcribe the limits of virtue and vice, and to ſtamp with the character of decent and becoming, actions, which in the eſtimation of low and vulgar minds are unhallowed, licentious, and deteſtable? The indulgence of a criminal inclination, under the ſanction of genteel and reſpectable aſſociates, is not unbecoming, hurts not the purity of the mind, and is not diſgraceful at all: But the very ſame gratification among thoſe of an humbler ſtation is quite a miſtaken one, is diſgraceful and the object of contempt.—This moſt inſtructive leſſon is not the effect of the warm unthinking temperament of youth; it is the reſult of cool, deliberate judgment.—Turbulent paſſions, which are ſo apt to pervert the underſtandiug and the heart, had then full time to ſubſide with his L——p, for he was, as he himſelf informs us, arrived at the age of fifty-five.

Eug. How is it poſſible that I could have ſo haſtily overlooked all this; I am aſtoniſhed at my inattention.

Con.

Con. You will have more cauſe yet to wonder at the deception you have laboured under. — I have collected ſeveral other paſſages ſtamped with the ſame ſignature, ſome of them in colours infinitely more diſguſting. *" Enjoy, ſays his L——p, the pleaſures of youth, you cannot do better, but refine and dignify them like a man of parts, let them raiſe and not ſink, let them adorn and not vilify your character, let them be the pleaſures of a gentleman." — The pleaſures here ſpoken of are of the ſame nature with thoſe I have juſt mentioned to you, and indeed are every where praiſed and recommended in the Letters we are conſidering. — They conſiſt in the unreſtrained indulgence of vanity; in being admired for accompliſhments which reach no farther than dreſs and elegance of manner; in gratifying without controul, within the limits of the polite and faſhionable world, every impure deſire and licentious appetite. — Our author was firmly perſuaded that his ſon could not poſſibly do better, than to drink in large and plentiful draughts, at theſe fountains of refined and faſhionable enjoyment. — " Seriouſly ſays he, writing to Mr. Stanhope at Manheim,‡ I am very glad you are whirled in ſuch a troubillon of pleaſures, they ſmooth, poliſh, and rub off rough corners, perhaps too you have ſome particular —,

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* 14th let. 2d vol. ‡ 88th let. 2d vol.

——, a word which ſignifies a criminal connection, which is ſtill more effectual."—This courſe of diſſipation, was to be the glorious object of his ambition; the advantages ariſing from it, would dignify him as a man of parts, they would raiſe and adorn his character; and all for this excellent reaſon, that ſuch indulgences would be the pleaſures of a gentleman.—An ingenious writer has given us ſomewhat different traits in his deſcription of that character.—*"As the great poet, ſays he, animates all the different parts of learning by the force of his genius, and irradiates all the compaſs of his knowledge by the luſtre and brightneſs of his fancy; ſo all the great and ſolid perfections of life appear in the finiſhed gentleman; as to his heart, it is firm and intrepid, void of all inordinate paſſions, and full of tenderneſs, compaſſion, and benevolence."

Eug. Such graces are indeed ſomewhat different from thoſe on which his L——p ſet his heart and affections.—

Con. Yes, infinitely different.—Notwithſtanding the pompous terms in which he ſpeaks of thoſe accompliſhments he is ſo much delighted with, they are no more like the perfections now mentioned, than the dark glimmering light of of the taper, is like the glory and ſplendor of the meridian ſun. Ought not the qualities of a gentleman

* Guardian.

gentleman to be ſuch as would adorn virtue, and make it ſhine with diſtinguiſhed beauty and grace, inſtead of thoſe which deſtroy its very foundation, and caſt a deep ſhade over the native turpitude and deformity of vice? The ſtation of a gentleman furniſhes him with the means of education and improvement, which have an admirable tendency to enlarge his underſtanding with ſublime ideas, and to give him a taſte for thoſe virtuous, thoſe manly and ennobling pleaſures, compared with which the enjoyments ariſing from the ceremony and parade of life, and from the indulgence of the ſenſual appetites, are mean, trifling, and inſignificant.

Eug. A ſuperior taſte might certainly be expected of a gentleman from his opportunities and ſituation in life; but is it not a common obſervation, that the morals of thoſe in the higher ſtations are generally more licentious, than of perſons placed in much inferior circumſtances?

Con. There is, undoubtedly, too much foundation for the remark; the reaſon of it is this, the opulence of perſons of ſuperior rank which if properly improved, would be a noble mean of raiſing them to eminent degrees of knowledge and virtue, is too often perverted into a mean of luxurious gratification.—Wealth, to a great many poſſeſſed of it, is proſtituted to very unworthy purpoſes; creates a reliſh for vain ſuperficial

ficial enjoyments, becomes the parent of idleneſs, prodigality, and the moſt thoughtleſs diſſipation; inſtead of being employed as it ought, to adorn the mind with noble and reſpectable qualities in proportion to the diſtinction of outward ſtation to which it exalts them, it only ſerves to render their imperfections more conſpicuous in the eyes of mankind.—But though the vices of thoſe who move in elevated ſpheres with reſpect to external advantages are more conſpicuous, it is much to be lamented, that faſhion has caſt over them a deceitful veil, with a view to conceal their native deformity, and render them leſs the objects of diſapprobation; but it was reſerved for the bold and adventurous genius of a Cheſterfield to juſtify and ſupport them.—In his view they are the objects of laudable purſuit, have nothing in them unſuitable to the dignity and excellence of our being; he rather conſidered them as ſhining ornaments, and neceſſary to perfection.—He tells his ſon that he had largely indulged in them, and inſtead of reflecting on it with repentance or the feelings of remorſe, made it the ſubject of his boaſt, and gloried in it.—If he was right in doing ſo, and theſe ſentiments claim our approbation, what ſhall we ſay of that eſteem of moral excellence, of the natural love of virtue, ſo univerſally and deeply implanted in the human heart? Theſe feelings muſt be an impoſition on the mind and altogether deluſive.—If dignity of ſtation, if

the pomp and parade of life can give a ſanction to any ſpecies of irregular indulgence, what becomes of thoſe laws of morality which in every period, in every circumſtance and condition of our being are of unchangeable and eternal obligation? Do you imagine, Eugenius, that the mind can be affected in the ſame manner by things which are of a contrary and oppoſite nature?

Eug. This appears to me impoſſible.

Con. And I believe muſt do ſo to every one elſe.—If then in genteel company and high life, violations of the rules of virtue loſe their nature, and are approved of; a ſtrict regard to chaſtity, to honour and integrity, in the ſame ſituation, cannot be the object of eſteem; ſhould then a perſon of rank tell Lord Ch———d that a regard to his own peace, and a delicacy of feeling with reſpect to matters of a moral nature, would not permit him on any occaſion to do an indecent or unbecoming action; he muſt neceſſarily, on his own principles, treat him with ridicule, or contempt; he muſt tell him that ſuch ſilly and awkward ſingularity would make him be deſpiſed, and prevent him from ſhining with any dignity or reputation in the world.—Of the like complexion with the reſt, are theſe obſervations of his Lordſhip. * "Our young countrymen have generally

* 7th let. 2d vol.

generally too little French, and too bad addreſs, either to preſent themſelves or be well received in the beſt French companies; and as a proof of it, there is no one inſtance of an Engliſhman's having ever been ſuſpected of a gallantry with a French woman of condition, but they take up with the diſgraceful commerce of proſtitutes, though if they had common addreſs, better atchievements would be extremely eaſy; a young fellow therefore muſt be very awkward to prefer low connections to a commerce in the courſe of the world not diſgraceful, with a woman of health, education and rank.—Men of addreſs and reſolution take no denial from man or woman, repulſed, they rally, go on, and nine times in ten prevail." In conſequence of ſuch ſucceſs in theſe honourable atchievements, he gives him this ſage advice, " If one method fails, try another, and ſuit your methods to the characters you have to do with." You perceive here an exact uniformity in his Lordſhip's ſentiments with thoſe we have juſt conſidered.—" To be ſuſpected of a gallantry," take notice that he uſes the word in this place, and in almoſt every other of his letters in its moſt criminal ſenſe, " with a French woman of condition is a mark of good breeding, and no imputation on a man's character, but a connection with proſtitutes, ſcandalous."—— Now conſider with yourſelf in what reſpect a woman of health, education and rank, who is

willing to ſacrifice her virtue to every man poſſeſſed of addreſs, and the polite arts of inſinuation, differs from a proſtitute.

Eug. I think they are to be ranked in the ſame claſs, ſo far as a regard to character is concerned.

Con. They certainly are.—The diſpoſitions of their minds which are quite independent of external circumſtances, and in no meaſure altered or affected by them, are perfectly the ſame and equally deteſtable—If Mr. Stanhope has conceived an affection for any of theſe ladies of diſtinction, and thinks that a particular connection with her will promote his intereſt, he is taught by his chaſte inſtructor, how he is to overcome any difficulties he may meet with in accompliſhing his wiſhes; "he is to ſuit his me-"thod to the character he has to do with; to "fortify himſelf with reſolution; if repulſed, "he is to rally; when one method fails, he "muſt try another; in this glorious cauſe he is "to go on with manly fortitude; to take no de-"nial; and he aſſures him for his encourage-"ment, that if he obſerves his counſel, there "is nine to one that he will in the end infalli-"bly ſucceed." What a peculiar felicity was it to our young candidate for ſo chaſte and honourable a prize, to have a father whoſe long and happy experience of the devices uſed on ſuch occaſions, whoſe knowledge of the weakneſs of nature, and of all the avenues to the heart, ſo excellently

excellently qualified him for pointing out to him the way of victory! Never did a parent diſcover greater anxiety to guard a beloved child from the baſeneſs and ruinous conſequences of vice, never did he take greater pains to purify, to refine his taſte, and to inſpire with him the love of virtue, than our author made uſe of to corrupt and debauch the mind of his ſon.—In the 224th Letter of the Third volume, written in French, but which the Editor has very carefully tranſlated, leaſt any one not acquainted with that language ſhould loſe the excellent moral it contains, he makes theſe obſervations on a Letter he had received from him. "If I durſt?* What ſhould hinder you from daring, one always dares when there are hopes of ſucceſs. A man of faſhion knows how and when to dare. He begins his approaches by diſtant attacks, by aſſiduities and attentions; if he is not immediately and totally repulſed, he continues to advance; after certain ſteps, ſucceſs is infallible, and none but very ſilly fellows can then either doubt, or not attempt it.—Is it the reſpectable character of Madame de la Valliere,† which prevents your daring, or are you intimidated at the fierce virtue of Madame du Pin? Does the invincible modeſty of the handſome Madame Caſe diſcourage, more than her beauty invites you? Fie for ſhame!

* 224th Letter 2d vol. † Obſerve that ſhe and thoſe who follow were married Ladies.

be convinced that the moſt virtuous woman, far from being offended at a declaration of love, is flattered by it."—Eternal infamy and reproach be the portion of ſuch execrable ſentiments! Until the mind is loſt to every feeling of the amiable and decent, until it is robbed of every lovely feature that adorns humanity, and the heart and underſtandings of mankind are as ſhamefully debauched as the author who produced them; they muſt be reflected on with merited indignation—It is evident that the occaſion of them were expreſſions of irreſolution in Mr. Stanhope, with reſpect to the gratification of an unchaſte paſſion he entertained for certain Ladies—The divine Being who made us, has planted the ſeeds of virtue deep in the human heart; the commiſſion of vice at firſt, ſhocks on reflection, and diſturbs the peace and tranquillity of the mind; but a repetition of it imperceptibly renders it leſs diſguſting, and quiets the accuſations of conſcience.—It ſeems, however, that Mr. Stanhope, though the utmoſt poſſible endeavours had been uſed by his father to weaken in him the influence of good principles, had not yet been able to reduce them to a ſtate of *genteel and faſhionable* inſenſibility.—The thoughts of attempting to indulge a licentious deſire, attended with aggravated circumſtances of guilt, damped his ſpirit, and filled him with timidity and heſitation. His Lordſhip conſidered this as nothing better than a childiſh

a childiſh weakneſs, which merited contemptuous ridicule; the yet unhardened Tyro, was afraid of doing a baſe action; but what was there to fear? Nothing which ſhould have had any influence in diverting him from his purpoſe: none but a very ſilly fellow would pay the leaſt regard to ſo mean a feeling, would doubt or not attempt to carry his point in ſuch a ſituation — On theſe occaſions a man of faſhion perpetually dares, nothing can intimidate him, provided he has the moſt diſtant proſpect of ſucceeding; if by attacks, aſſiduities and attentions, he can remove the obſtacles in the way of his gratification, can find an unguarded unſuſpecting hour in which the object of his wiſhes will fall a victim to his ſnares, all is well, and he has nothing to diſturb his repoſe.

Eug. Theſe indeed, Sir, are ſhameful ſentiments. — But what is the reaſon that L—d C———d, when he recommends theſe Ladies to his ſon, ſpeaks of them as modeſt, virtuous, and reſpectable; I ſhould rather imagine that this was the moſt effectual way to prevent him from purſuing any unbecoming deſigns he might have formed againſt them.

Con. It is very natural for you to think ſo, but the motive of his taking notice that they were poſſeſſed of thoſe qualities was, that he might have an opportunity of turning them into ridicule; you ſee he evidently laughs at them,

ſpeaks of them as things of no conſequence.—Had he been convinced that modeſty and virtue were really reſpectable, poſſeſſed of real intrinſic beauty and excellence, and at the ſame time adviſed his ſon to treat them as he does, it would have argued a degree of depravity ſcarcely to be imputed to an infernal demon.——The ſame taſte that would have led him to eſteem, and ſpeak well of theſe amiable characters, would make him look on a deſign to injure them with becoming indignation.—In the eyes of his Lordſhip they were of no account, had nothing in them to reſtrain the indulgence of a ſenſual appetite, and he wanted his ſon to think, and act in reſpect to them with the ſame indifference.—Beauty invited, and would he ſuffer innocence, modeſty and virtue, to be any obſtacle to his gratification; Fie for ſhame! What a noble exclamation! How does it emblazon an illuſtrious title, and ſhed a bright luſtre on the elevating diſtinctions of human life! But let us go on with our remarks.—In another letter he ſpeaks in this manner,—*"I am aſſured that Madame de Blos is exceſſively pretty, and that ſhe hath as yet been ſcrupulouſly conſtant to her huſband, though ſhe has now been married above a year. Surely ſhe does not reflect that woman wants poliſhing; I would have you."—Then he adds,

"force,

* 218th let. 3d vol.

" force, aſſiduities, attentions, paſſionate declarations on your ſide, will produce ſome irreſolute wiſhes at leaſt on hers, and whenever the ſlighteſt wiſhes ariſe, the reſt will follow." How now, you ſeem to be agitated!

Eug. If I were not, I muſt be utterly unworthy of your inſtructions, and dead to every virtuous feeling of the heart. I bluſh at the thoughts of having been ſo groſly duped by my folly.—But beſides thoſe enticing ſeducements does he alſo recommend force in accompliſhing his execrable deſign?

Con. I gave you his words without the ſmalleſt particle of addition—If aſſiduities, perſuaſion, and the Syren arts of inſinuating addreſs, cannot prevail with the Lady to give up her virtue, more violent methods muſt be uſed to make her obedient to his wiſhes.—Force is a word of a very obvious and ſimple meaning, and cannot poſſibly be underſtood in any other ſenſe.—— Common vices give painful diſguſt to every pure and delicate mind, but ſuch complicated villainy as this, thrills it with horror; the crime to which he is incited, is of ſo deep a dye, that it has been held in deteſtation by all civilized nations, and puniſhed with the utmoſt ſeverity.—And is this the book, *Eugenius*, which is ſo univerſally read and admired? Would it admit of a doubt, one would ſcarcely think it poſſible!—Is it not aſtoniſhing, that the mere beauty of language

and propriety of expreſſion, ſhould have ſuch captivating power as to be able to throw a veil over principles of the moſt pernicious tendency, and ſhocking to the firſt feelings of the heart? That it ſhould be agreeable to rakes and profeſſed libertines, is not ſurpriſing, though there are many things in it that cannot be pleaſing even to them, unleſs they have arrived at the laſt ſtage of degeneracy and corruption; but that perſons of a ſober way of thinking ſhould give their countenance to ſuch a production, that they ſhould ſacrifice the cauſe of virtue to a little tranſient amuſement, to what is calculated merely to tickle the ear and imagination, is exceedingly difficult to account for.—His Lordſhip taking notice to Mr. Stanhope of the laws in deſpotic governments, with reſpect to reſtraining the liberty of the preſs, expreſly ſays, that no books prejudicial to religion, or the intereſts of the community, ought to be publiſhed.—He moſt certainly in this judgment, pronounced the condemnation of his own Letters. For to ſay nothing here of their other dark ſhades, is not the crime of adultery to which he encourages his ſon with the moſt licentious freedom, attended with ruinous conſequences both to the individual and ſociety? Marriage, you know, was appointed to confine within chaſte and virtuous bounds, the wanderings of irregular deſire; to refine theſe ſenſual paſſions, which improperly indulged, weaken the powers of the mind,

mind, unfit it for the duties of life, and are the ſource of remorſe and diſtemperature.—It is a ſacred relation, which to thoſe who enter into it, lays a foundation for the tendereſt union of heart and affections, the moſt entire confidence, and inviolable friendſhip.—The advantages that naturally flow from it, alleviate the cares and heighten the enjoyments of mankind.—Now what has the gallant, or in other words the adulterous invader, to boaſt of as the fruits of his crime? Why that to the utmoſt of his power he robs his fellow-creatures of theſe valuable bleſſings; ſtrikes a dagger into the peace of private families; introduces into them the furious demons of jealouſy, ſtrife and contention; that he deſtroys the affection of parents for their children, tempts to the commiſſion of perjury and other vices ſhocking to humanity.

Eug. What a licentious and depraved heart muſt he be poſſeſſed of, that can either adviſe to, or be guilty of ſo aggravated an offence?

Con. His morals, indeed, muſt be utterly corrupted. But what you and I, and the generality of mankind call depravity, was *nothing* in the opinion of L—d C———d.—One would think that he rather gloried in theſe circumſtances which aggravate the native turpitude of vice.—Madame Caſe, Madame du Pin, and Madame Valliere, whom he took ſuch pains to perſuade Mr. Stanhope to ſeduce, were married Ladies,

of

of ſpotleſs innocence and integrity; they were modeſt, virtuous, and reſpectable.—An improper connection with thoſe who have loſt their character, is leſs deteſtable than the conduct of the man who firſt robs them of it.—They who corrupt others, and are the cauſe of their breaking through the reſtraints of virtue in the beginning, are in a great meaſure chargeable with all the vices and unhappy conſequences which frequently follow from it.—The beautiful Madame de Blos had it ſeems married a huſband whom ſhe loved, and was diſpoſed to diſcharge her duty to him with untainted honour and fidelity. But our author thought that it was too much for her to live more than a year in a ſtate of innocence; his ſon muſt not let ſo favourable an opportunity ſlip of ſhewing how much he had profited by his inſtructions, he muſt attack her honour by force, aſſiduities, and paſſionate declarations. How worthy to be boaſted of was this attempt to triumph over the ſentiments of chaſtity and religion; I ſay, religion, for when Madame de Blos entered into wedlock, ſhe kneeled at the ſacred altar, and with thoſe circumſtances of ſolemnity fitted to inſpire with awe and make a deep impreſſion on the heart, called the eternal Being to witneſs that ſhe would never be unfaithful to her huſband, or act a part unbecoming an affectionate and virtuous wife.—And was it a light inſignificant matter to tempt her to violate theſe awful

awful obligations, and to uſe every poſſible device to cover with guilt a mind formed to enjoy the ſweet and ſerene delights which flow from innocence and virtue through all the periods of an immortal exiſtence? When we think of ſuch baſeneſs our hearts ſhudder.——— How do you think his Lordſhip would have liked it, had others formed deſigns of the ſame kind againſt his own domeſtic happineſs, his wife, ſiſter, or daughter?

Eug. I imagine he could not have been diſpleaſed with them on his own principles.

Con. He certainly would; the genuine feeling of nature would have got the better of his principles.—He would have reſented them with the ſtrongeſt indignation.—Had any perſon attempted the honour of a ſiſter, or the wife of his boſom, he would have made him feel the very utmoſt weight of his provoked diſpleaſure.—But to do as you would be done by, does not appear to have been a favourite maxim with his Lordſhip.—If it had, he could never adviſe his ſon, as we find he does in a variety of places, not to be in the leaſt ſcrupulous to injure others in a point of the moſt tender and delicate nature when he ſhould find it at all pleaſing or uſeful to him.—But his notions relating to matrimony are ſo extremely licentious, that it is to be hoped they were peculiar to himſelf.—Can any thing be a greater proof of a debauched diſpoſition than the

following

following ſentiment. *"I preſume that men and their wives neither love or hate each other the more upon account of the form of matrimony that has been ſaid over them.—Cohabitation produces love or hatred in the ſame degree out of matrimony as in that relation." And ſo the circumſtance of two perſons joined in marriage, having given a mutual preference to each other with reſpect to a union to continue through the whole of life; their being bound by the moſt ſacred ties according to the laws of virtue and honour, to mutual confidence, friendſhip, and a tender concern for the happineſs of each other, has no influence to ſtrengthen reciprocally their affections.—Can there be a more unjuſt and unnatural aſſertion?—Would any perſon but one of the moſt profligate morals compare the ſenſual unhallowed attachment to a proſtitute, with the affection ſpringing from a relation which is the foundation of eſteem, gratitude, and the indulgence of chaſte and virtuous love? But it was neceſſary that L—d Ch———d ſhould make light of the obligations of marriage, that his ſon might have all ſcruples in that point removed, and be enabled to violate them without the reproaches of his conſcience.—The perſuading him to ſuch unbecoming actions, was a matter about which he ſeems to have been particularly ſolicitous;

* 118th let. 1ſt vol.

ſolicitous; He gives him frequent advices with relation to it, and as if he were afraid that this was not ſufficient, he endeavours to animate him by the influence of example.—In particular in the 247th Letter * of the Third volume he takes notice that, a criminal correſpondence, firſt with the Dutcheſs of Burgundy, and afterwards with another Lady, raiſed the Duke de Richlieu to all his honours, and then beſeeches Mr. Stanhope, for God's ſake, to acquire the ſame manners and diſpoſition, in order to reap from them like advantages.—In another Letter, ſpeaking of his own vanity, and paſſion for pleaſure in general, he ſays, †"To women I talked what I was ſure would pleaſe; flattery, gallantry and love; by my inſinuating addreſs I ſoon grew in faſhion; this gave me the reputation of having had ſome women, and that reputation whether true or falſe really got me others."—His three hundred and eighteenth Letter of the fourth volume where he ſpeaks of ſome complaints he formerly had in Holland, and of a preſcription he got from Boerhaave, which he recommends to his ſon, is a farther proof of the licentiouſneſs of his morals.—In general, L—d C———d cloaths his pernicious advices in language, not offenſive to a chaſte ear, but there are ſeveral expreſſions in his Letters ſo groſly indelicate, that a regard to decency

* 247th let. 3d vol. † 260th let. 3d vol.

decency will not permit me to mention them to you. I have ſaid enough to you on this hateful part of the ſubject, and I am ſure we are both tired of it.—Let us therefore at preſent put an end to the converſation.

DIALOGUE

DIALOGUE VI.

CONSTANTIUS, EUGENIUS.

Con. I WAS much pleaſed yeſterday, to find, that what I ſaid to you, with reſpect to the looſe morals contained in L—d C———d's Letters to his Son, had ſo good an effect upon you; if you are willing to reſume the ſubject, there are a few other particulars relating to it, of which I wiſh to give you my ſentiments.

Eug. I ſhall attend to them with pleaſure—I dare ſay they will both inſtruct and entertain me.

Con. I will endeavour to make them as uſeful to you as poſſible; they relate to his L——p's Maxims, concerning Diſſimulation, the Fair Sex, and Duelling—As we have now a favourable opportunity we will talk half an hour on the firſt of theſe; the other two we will take afterwards in their order—What ſay you, Eugenius?

Eug. It is perfectly agreeable to me, Sir.

Con. I am the more deſirous to explain to you my thoughts, with reſpect to Diſſimulation, as it is not a vice peculiar to his L——p, but which prevails almoſt univerſally in the faſhionable world —In

—In proportion as ſociety has emerged from a condition of ſimple uncultivated nature, and advanced to a ſtate of refinement, Diſſimulation has acquired new and encreaſing ſtrength.—A wild American, or inhabitant of the Cape of Good Hope, knows not what it is to deceive; his words, without any diſguiſe or affectation, communicate the ſentiments of his heart—Take him out of this uncivilized ſituation, and place him in a community who have learned the arts of modern refinement; inſenſibly he is taught to conceal his thoughts, and to caſt a deluſive veil over the honeſt undeſigning ſimplicity of Nature. ——If Commerce, and the other cauſes, which have united mankind more intimately together, have mollified the harſh and turbulent paſſions of the mind, and been friendly to the intention and advancement of the elegant arts, that ingenuous love of truth, ſo congenial to the ſoul, has by no means been equally promoted by them.——In the progreſs of human ſociety, aſcend but one ſtep above the huſbandman, who finds the means of ſubſiſtence in the produce of the field, and you will perceive, in many, a ſtrong tendency to act under a borrowed form, and to diſguiſe truth under falſe and deceitful colours.—As you go up in the ſcale which marks the various diſtinction of ranks, you find the arts of Diſſimulation gradually improving! When you arrive at courts, "you ſee, to uſe our author's words, nothing there

there exactly as it appears to be; often very different, ſometimes directly contrary *. Intereſt, which is the real ſpring of every thing there, equally creates and diſſolves friendſhips, produces and reconciles enmities;" for as Dryden very juſtly obſerves, "Politicians neither love or hate."—This is ſo true, that you may think you connect yourſelf with two friends to day, and be obliged to morrow to make your option between them as enemies.

Were you to attend minutely to the conduct of thoſe in the genteeler ſtations of life, were you to examine the forms and ceremonies which muſt be obſerved in their intercourſe with each other, according to the eſtabliſhed rules of good breeding, how many violations would you be witneſs to, of the dictates of ſincerity? If one does a ſmall ſervice to another, which coſts him ſo little trouble or expence as to be ſcarcely worth the acknowledgement, he who is obliged tells the other, he is under infinite obligations to him.—If a perſon has met with any thing of a painful nature, his acquaintance aſſures him that he is exceedingly diſtreſſed at his misfortune; or, if a lucky circumſtance has added to his good fortune, he ſalutes him with the ſtrongeſt expreſſions of congratulation.—Were you at the ſame time to look into the bottom of his heart, inſtead of diſcovering that lively glow of benevolence you might

* L. 159. 2d vol.

might reaſonably expect, you would ſcarcely perceive the ſmalleſt traces of either joy or ſorrow.—In the polite world it is the mode to exaggerate certain feelings of the mind quite beyond their juſt proportion, and to lay perpetual reſtraints upon thoſe which Nature deſigned ſhould be a ſource of pleaſing enjoyment to us. —It is certain, that the eſtabliſhed *etiquette* of good breeding, has refined away, at leaſt, one half of our moſt rational pleaſures; I wiſh I had no cauſe to add, of our virtue alſo; in reſpect at leaſt to ſincerity, I may undoubtedly pronounce this without any heſitation.—Though in points of mere ceremony, and other matters, which are ſuppoſed to be in themſelves of a trifling nature, it may be thought that a ſtretch of veracity is of no conſequence, yet it evidently has a direct tendency to leſſen in our eſteem the obligations of truth.* From the conſtitution of the human mind, ſmaller branches of any moral virtue, more eſpecially if they are habitually committed, lead immediately to more flagrant violations of it.—Truth is a virtue of ineſtimable value; a ſtrict regard to it is a moſt amiable and engaging quality, which dignifies and ſheds a pe-

* It is taken notice of by Hiſtorians, as one of the ſhining qualities which formed the admirable character of Epaminondas, that from his high regard to truth, he would not deviate from it, even in the moſt trifling matters.

peculiar luſtre over all the other graces which form a reſpectable character.—Were a man poſſeſſed of every endowment and accompliſhment we can poſſibly conceive, except this, he never could command our eſteem, or deſerve our friendſhip. ——So far from meriting our good opinion, he would be an object of contempt.——The ſtatuary or painter, who, in attempting to give us a repreſentation of nature, ſhould ſpoil the beauty and ſymmetry of his piece, by a deformed ill-proportioned feature, might as well expect our applauſe, as the perſon in whom we diſcover an indifference to truth.—For what purpoſe did that glorious Being who formed us, beſtow the faculty of ſpeech? Was it not his principal intention that by it we might be enabled to convey to others the native undiſguiſed thoughts and ſentiments of our breaſts? Is not this noble privilege, which ſo remarkably diſtinguiſhes us from the inferior animal creation, the foundation of friendſhip, and of that intercourſe betwixt the different members of ſociety, without which they cannot be united, or mutually promote each other's intereſt and happineſs? But when it is perverted to the baſe unhallowed purpoſe of diſſimulation, it deſtroys all confidence, fills the minds of thoſe with whom we are connected, with ſuſpicion and diſtruſt, and produces a variety of evils which diſturb the peace of mankind, and render them wretched and miſerable.

—As the character of a diſſembler is exceedingly unamiable, and of a moſt pernicious tendency to the intereſt of ſociety, it is a peculiar felicity to the world, that few things are more difficult than to preſerve it uniformly, without detection.—The hypocrite is at conſtant war with himſelf; the diſguiſe which he wears, to cover his deceitful intentions, is in continual oppoſition to the feelings of his heart, which lie in wait to ſeize any unguarded moment, in order to diſcover to mankind his real diſpoſitions.—He is therefore obliged to have at all times a watchful and jealous eye over his words and actions, to prevent ſuſpicion, and preſerve the appearance of conſiſtence in his conduct —One ſcheme laid for accompliſhing his inſidious deſigns will require to be hid from the public view by a multitude of others.—A ſingle unguarded ſlip reveals the whole of the impoſture, and at once precipitates him into infamy.

Eug. But one would think that there cannot be a warmer advocate for the excellence and importance of ſincerity than L—d C——d in the following inſtructions to his ſon. *"Truth is the firſt duty of religion and morality; whoever has not truth, is not ſuppoſed to have any good quality." †I really know nothing more criminal, more mean, and more ridiculous, than lying.—

* 69th Letter 1ſt vol. † 94th letter ditto.

ing.—Equivocating, evading, ſhuffling, is ſomething ſo mean, and betrays ſo much fear, that whoever practiſes them, always deſerves to be, and often will be treated with contempt. "Remember then as long as you live, that nothing but ſtrict truth can carry you through the world, with either your conſcience or your honour unwounded."—‡"To violate truth is the only art of mean capacities, and the only refuge of mean ſpirits." Would not one conclude that the mind which could dictate ſuch advices, muſt have been animated by the ſtrongeſt regard to candor and veracity?

Con. Were you to draw ſuch a concluſion from them, you would find yourſelf exceedingly miſtaken.——The inconſiſtence which appears in ſeveral parts of L—d C——d's Letters is perpectly aſtoniſhing.—Sometimes ſentiments are expreſſed highly honourable to virtue, ſentiments which tend to adorn the character with every amiable and reſpectable quality. On other occaſions, and beyond all compariſon, the moſt frequently, you meet with thoſe which are utterly vitiated and depraved.— The cauſe of this I before explained to you.—When his Lordſhip writes like a perſon impreſſed with a ſenſe of the excellence of virtue, he uſes his words in a meaning quite reconcileable to the moſt licentious morals.

‡ 94th Letter 1ſt vol.

morals. As I ſhewed you in former inſtances that this was plainly the caſe, it is evidently ſo in what he ſays here of the impropriety and meanneſs of inſincerity.—What he inculcates relating to the violation of truth, reſpects low and vulgar inſtances of hypocriſy; he not only indulges, but encourages his ſon in thoſe arts of diſſimulation that might either ſerve his intereſt or gratify his ambition; which he by no means conſidered as unbecoming in a gentleman.—The quotations that follow, will convince you of this. —In the hundred and twenty-ninth Letter of the ſecond volume he ſays, *"When you go into good company, obſerve their turn, their manners, &c. and conform your own to them; go deeper ſtill; obſerve their characters, and pry as far as you can into both their hearts and their heads; ſeek for their particular merit; their predominant paſſion or prevailing weakneſs, and you will then know what to bait your hook with to catch them." In the hundred and thirty-fourth — † "The height of abilities is to have a frank open exterior and a reſerved interior; to be upon your guard, and yet by a ſeeming natural openneſs to put people off theirs. A man of the world muſt, like the cameleon, be able to take every different hue." — In the hundred and

* 129th Letter 2d vol. † 134th let. 2d vol.

and thirty-fifth, — ‡" Not to ſeem to perceive the weakneſſes and the idle affectations of the company, but even to flatter them in a certain manner, is not only very allowable, but in truth a ſort of polite duty."— In the hundred and fifty-firſt, — § " I recommended to you in my laſt a piece of art, the flattering of people behind their back," then he proceeds to tell Mr. Stanhope how he was to manage his own feelings, ſo as to be able to take advantage of the weakneſs of others. — On which his Lordſhip takes notice that it might be objected that he was recommending to his ſon diſſimulation; he ſubmits to the charge, and juſtifies the propriety of his conduct. —In the hundred and ſeventieth Letter * he adviſes him to ſtudy carefully the paſſions and the taſtes of thoſe he would wiſh to profit by, and to adapt himſelf to their weakneſs with that eaſe and alacrity which would give him a power over them.—In the ſecond volume we meet with ſeveral paſſages to the ſame purpoſe. — A verſatility of manners is as neceſſary in ſocial as a verſatility of parts in political life; one muſt yield in order to prevail; one muſt humble one's ſelf to be exalted; like Saint Paul become all things to all men. † " In the courſe of the world the qualifications of the cameleon

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‡ 135th Let. 2d. Vol. § 115ſt Let. 2d. Vol. * 170th Let. 2d. Vol. † 212 Let. 3d. Vol.

are not unneceſſary."— ‖ "Humours muſt be flattered, the *mollia tempora* muſt be ſtudied and known, confidence acquired by ſeeming frankneſs and profited of by ſilent ſkill; and above all you muſt gain and engage the heart to betray the underſtanding to you. — Hæ tibi erunt artes.— This was the diſtinguiſhing character of Alcibiades, and a happy one it was, that he could occaſionally and with ſo much eaſe adopt the different and even the moſt oppoſite habits and manners, that each ſeemed natural to him.*— "Happy the man who with a certain fund of parts and knowledge, gets acquainted with the world early enough to make it his bubble."†— "Let Miſanthropes, and would-be philoſophers, declaim as much as they pleaſe againſt the ſimulation and diſſimulation of courts, theſe invectives are always the reſult of ignorance, ill-humour, or envy."—"Truth, but not the whole truth, muſt be the invariable principle of every man who hath either religion, honour, or prudence."‡— Was it poſſible for L—d Ch——d to expreſs a ſtronger deſire to make his ſon a compleat hypocrite? You ſee he advices him to ſtudy carefully the turn of his company, their manners: to pry as deeply as poſſible into the qualities of their heads and hearts; to make himſelf

‖ 216th let. 3d vol. * 219th l. 3d vol. † 221ſt. Let. 3d. Vol. ‡ 245th let. 3d vol.

himſelf acquainted with their reſpective merits and prevailing weakneſſes; and with what view? ——That for his own private ends, he may know with what he is to bait his hook in order to catch them, and put them off their guard; that he might ſee which of the different hues of the cameleon would be moſt proper for his purpoſe; all which on every occaſion he muſt be able to aſſume with the greateſt expertneſs and facility.—He was to make it his particular care to be intimately acquainted with the diſpoſitions of thoſe he was connected with, that he might know how to flatter them to their face and behind their back; that he might know when to yield in order to prevail; that by a happy verſatility of manners, that diſtinguiſhing and honourable quality in the character of Alcibiades, which his Lordſhip is emulous that his ſon ſhould imitate, and by becoming all things to all men, he might recommend himſelf to their predominant humours and inclinations.—Suppoſe a perſon to be poſſeſſed of any private intelligence of importance to Mr. Stanhope, how was he to come to the knowledge of it; the point was eaſy; he had the honeſt counſels of a moſt candid and ingenious parent to inſtruct him.—He was to ſtudy his prevailing weakneſs, and to apply himſelf to it with inſinuating addreſs; and when, under the appearance of friendſhip and open undeſigning ſincerity he had inſinuated

himſelf into his good opinion, and removed all ſuſpicion of his intention, then, in one of thoſe *mollia tempora*, thoſe unſuſpecting moments, when his mind ſhould be full of confidence in his honour and integrity, he was dexterouſly to avail himſelf of the opportunity, engage his heart to betray his underſtanding, and then make his own advantage of the ſecret found out by this fair and generous device, *Hæ tibi erunt artes.* — Execrable arts!—The accompliſhed villain who in the ſemblance of affectionate regard plunges his treacherous dagger into the heart of his friend is not more abominable.

Are theſe arts the effect of that ſincerity mentioned by our author as one of the firſt duties of religion and morality, without which a man is ſuppoſed not to have any good quality and muſt become the deteſtation of God and men? Is this the manner in which his ſon is to paſs through the world with his conſcience and his honour unwounded.

Eug. It is all a deluſion; the uncorrupted mind muſt behold ſuch advice with horror. But at the ſame time, how, ſtrictly ſpeaking, can ſeveral of the particulars you have mentioned relating to his Lordſhip, be conſidered as violations of truth?

Con. Have you reflected on the nature of them when you aſk that queſtion? Was not the bait with which Mr. Stanhope was adviſed to catch

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and make a bubble of thoſe who ſhould be ſubject to his inſidious practices, the pretending to be what he really was not; and is not that falſehood? Is not the aſſuming a verſatility of manners capable of being adapted to any form, however foreign to the temper and diſpoſitions of the mind, ſtrongly marked with the features of that quality? ——

What do you ſay of putting on a frank open exterior, whilſt at the ſame time the heart has locked up within it every device of crafty ſuſpicious reſerve? Is not this of the very ſame tincture with flattery, the praiſing others for good qualities to which you are perfectly conſcious they have no pretenſions? The preciſe idea of falſehood is the uſe of words which impoſe upon mankind by making them believe that you have thoughts, intentions, or diſpoſitions which you really have not. And if a diſingenious addreſs, manner, or any thing in your external behaviour produces exactly the ſame effect, where is the difference? The words lyar and hypocrite have different ſounds, but they are both fruit of the very ſame tree.——

The man who by his countenance expreſſes approbation of any thing ſaid by another, whilſt he is inwardly diſpleaſed with it, and the perſon who tells you he is pleaſed with it, and contradicts his feelings, both teſtify an equal diſregard to veracity.—The manner of our addreſs, looks, and outward demeanour are juſt as expreſſive,

and are as powerful means of deceit with reſpect to the emmotions and diſpoſitions of the heart, as words are with relation to our ideas and ſentiments.

Does not this bold poſition ſpurn every reſtraint laid upon it by the rules of morality? "Truth, but not the whole truth, muſt be the invariable principle of every man who hath either religion, honour, or prudence." The expreſon here, truth, but not the whole truth, is taken, except the alteration of a word, from the form of adminiſtring an oath to witneſſes in judicial matters; trace it from this original, and it ſignifies that the declaring ſo much of truth as is agreeable to, and the keeping back that part of it which if known, would be prejudicial to our intereſt, though in doing ſo we violate a moral obligation, is juſtified by religion, honour, and prudence.—This maxim may be agreeable to prudence conſidered as the quality of a cunning ſelf-intereſted hypocrite, but how it can be reconciled to any ſentiment of honour or religion, a man of a leſs diſcerning intrepid ingenuity than our noble author would ſcarcely venture to explain.—Agreeably to this you obſerve he expreſsly declares himſelf an advocate for diſſimulation.

Eug. But Sir, Is every kind of diſſimulation improper? I ſhould rather imagine that the concealing our thoughts and feelings on many occaſions, is not only innocent, but our duty.

Con.

Con. That we ſhould ſpeak the whole of what we think on all occaſions is no way incumbent on us; this would be not only imprudent, but often productive of very bad conſequences both to ourſelves and others.—It is alſo exceedingly right that we ſhould reſtrain all our unſocial paſſions within the bounds of decency and good breeding; and mould our demeanour in the manner that will render us moſt pleaſing and agreeable to our friends and connections.—But then we muſt never diſſemble.—Diſſimulation marks a deceitful diſpoſition, and is uſed to expreſs a want of candour and ingenuity, which is not conſiſtent with the dictates of integrity. In reſpect to matters of this kind a good man can never be at a loſs.—There is a line here, pointing out the boundary betwixt virtue and vice, which he will inſtantly perceive on appealing to the hoheſt unprejudiced feelings of his heart.

Eug. But is there no indulgence to be granted in this point to perſons in a particular ſituation?——Lord Cheſterfield had choſen for his ſon a diſtinguiſhed political department, and a conſiderable degree of addreſs was neceſſary to qualify him for it; may not this in ſome meaſure plead his apology in reſpect to the advices he gives him relating to inſincerity?

Con. It is impoſſible.—Sincerity is one of the unchangeable laws of morality, and lies at the foundation of all the duties it enjoins; dignity

of ſtation or the nature of any employment whatever which men may have aſſigned them, can no way give a ſanction to the infringment of it. —Were this ſo, might it not with as good reaſon diſpenſe with the obligations to every kind of virtue? If a prime miniſter, or reſident at a foreign court may innocently practiſe hypocriſy in order to accompliſh any particular point; ſuppoſe in this caſe the moſt criminal gallantry to be as uſeful to him, may he not commit it? Why not on this principle? and ſo ſaith his Lordſhip.—And what will you ſay of aſſaſſination, perjury, or any other aggravated ſpecies of immorality? the ſame motive will equally juſtify them.—But will it really do ſo according to the ſentiments of any uncorrupted heart? He could have no pretenſions to that amiable character who could anſwer this queſtion in the affirmative.——

Deceit in any ſituation, rank or condition, is particularly hateful; you remember what generous indignation the people of England diſcovered at a late inſtance of it practiſed by certain perſons at the concluſion of a treaty with the ſimple unlettered inhabitants of India. Though he ſhould be ever ſo ſubject to the imputation of a miſanthrope, and would-be philoſopher, every honeſt man will exclaim, and expreſs a becoming indignation againſt the vice of hypocriſy and diſſimulation, whether he finds it in a cottage or a court.—Were the influence of theſe Letters entirely

entirely confined to thoſe in the ſame rank of life with the perſon to whom they are addreſſed, perhaps the cauſe of virtue would be very little injured by them; but the reader, let his ſtation be ever ſo different, if he brings himſelf to approve of the licentious inſtructions they contain, though he does not conſider them as either addreſſed or applicable to himſelf, will feel inſenſibly their pernicious effects on his own conduct. —If he can be perſuaded to think that the line of virtue may be broken and diſpenſed with in any circumſtances, he will ſoon apply the ſame kind of reaſoning to juſtify it in his own.—But I had almoſt forgot to take notice to you, that his Lordſhip, in order to render his inſtructions more effectual with reſpect to that crafty cameleon-like verſatility of manners, which he ſo warmly recommends to Mr. Stanhope, ſtrongly adviſes him to form a particular connection with the Jeſuits. You know the character of the Jeſuits, that their inſidious hypocritical devices in principles and practice, by which they attempted to annihilate every obligation of truth and ſincerity, have made them the diſgrace of human nature.—They are become quite proverbial on account of their diſingenuous arts.—To have the cunning of a Jeſuit expreſſes that quality in its moſt deteſtable perfection.*——

* 165th let. 2d vol.

Theſe are the men, though baniſhed with infamy out of almoſt every country in Europe, whom L—d Ch———d adviſes his ſon to bring to his houſe, and be intimately acquainted with, in order to be inſtructed by them in the methods of diſſimulation.

Eug. I am ſenſible that the Jeſuits are exceedingly odious on account of the qualities you have mentioned, and cannot but look upon them as the only fit inſtructors for ſuch as wiſh to have all the honeſt dictates of nature rooted from their minds; but I requeſt that you may explain yourſelf more particularly on this point, for I am not quite clear about it, whether there are not ſome circumſtances, ſuch as the immediate proſpect of impending evil, wherein truth may be diſpenſed with, without the breach of a moral obligation.

Con. When the caſe is of ſuch a nature that much hurt with reſpect to our ſafety or property will be the certain conſequence of an inviolable adherence to truth, it muſt be owned that the ſituation is a very trying one; but that even ſuch a circumſtance will not juſtify a breach of veracity, has been the opinion of philoſophers diſtinguiſhed for their eminence and integrity.—And theſe have been the reaſons of their belief. —It is evident that among thoſe laws of virtue which are of unchangeable and eternal obligation; a regard to truth is of the firſt importance, both on account of the influence it has in render-

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ing the character of men reſpectable, and in preſerving the peace and happineſs of ſociety.——But if the limits of veracity may on any occaſion be infringed, would not this have a tendency to deſtroy, in the opinion of mankind, all obligations to it.—On this principle, the perſons concerned are to be the only judges of the circumſtances in which a falſehood may be told with propriety.—Theſe will be various according to their different complexions and diſpoſitions.——One man will think it his duty only to violate truth when his life is at ſtake; a ſecond will diſpenſe with it, when he is in danger of loſing a conſiderable part of his property; a third will be leſs ſcrupulous, and think he may lawfully deviate from veracity, in order to avoid a much leſs evil; whilſt a fourth will ſee no reaſon, if falſifying is not inconſiſtent with morality to avoid miſchief, why is it not quite as agreeable to it, when we have a view of obtaining by it ſome valuable good.—In this manner truth will loſe all its dignity and excellence, and come to be violated on every, even the moſt trifling occaſion.—Beſides, if ſincerity may be diſpenſed with, either to avoid evil, or gain ſome preſent good, why not purity, or any other virtue, when the very ſame end is to be accompliſhed by it; and then what becomes of all moral diſtinctions? Does not this ſeem to you to be a fair concluſion?

Eug. I have nothing to ſay in oppoſition to it.

Con.

Con. Never give up this principle that virtue is the diſtinguiſhing glory of your nature, and that nothing ſhould prevail with you to depart from it.——The various trials ariſing from the temptations of life, are deſigned by the great maſter of the drama to refine your taſte and give dignity and ſtrength to your nobler affections.—A conſciouſneſs of retaining your integrity in every ſituation will raiſe you to true honour and eſteem, will heighten your pleaſures, and caſt a divine luſtre over all the future ſcenes of your exiſtence.——But enough on this point, to-morrow we will go on with our enquiry.

DIALOGUE

DIALOGUE VII.

CONSTANTIUS, EUGENIUS.

Con. YOU know we yesterday considered L—d Ch———d's maxims with respect to dissimulation; the point next to be examined is his sentiments of the fair sex.

Eug. His opinion of them appears not to be very favourable, nor consistent with those professions of love, admiration and respect of them which he frequently inculcates.——It is to me somewhat uncommon.

Con. Uncommon! It is perfectly original; I suppose no author since the days of Adam has produced any thing like it; to treat the fair sex with respect and delicacy, is a mark of urbanity; it is one of the polite and genteel accomplishments.——How could his Lordship in this particular utterly forget all his admired breeding and good manners on which he so much piqued himself? It will be a very agreeable office to me to attempt to vindicate them from the unmerited aspersions he has cast upon them. * —" He says

* 112th let. 1st vol.

ſays that a regard to the graces is the whole of women, who are guided by nothing elſe."—— But this is a high compliment compared with other of his remarks upon them; for he aſſerts, * "that women have but two paſſions, vanity and love, and that in general all they ſay and all they do, tends to their gratification; he who flatters them moſt, pleaſes them beſt, and they are moſt in love with him who they think is moſt in love with them. No adulation is too ſtrong for them, no aſſiduity too great, no ſimulation of paſſion too groſs." In the ſame ſtrain he aſks his ſon on another occaſion, † "if he had found out that every woman was infallibly to be gained by every ſort of flattery." In another Letter he deſires him to ‡ "be convinced that the moſt virtuous woman far from being offended at a declaration of love is flattered by it," that is, the moſt virtuous woman will not be diſpleaſed, but gratified by a declaration of a deſire to rob her of her virtue, which evidently is the kind of love he here ſpeaks of; this is juſt the ſame thing as if his Lordſhip had aſſerted that a ſtrictly virtuous woman is no where to be met with; agreeably to which he poſitively affirms elſewhere, that any woman may be had every way.—But it is in the hundred and twenty-ninth Letter of his

* 177th let. 2d vol. † 243d let. 3d vol.
‡ 234th let. 3d. vol.

his ſecond volume, that he expreſſes himſelf moſt fully on this ſubject.—*" I will ſays he to Mr. Stanhope, let you into certain arcanas that will be very uſeful for you to know, but which you muſt with the utmoſt care conceal, and never ſeem to know. Women then are only children of a larger growth; they have an entertaining tattle and ſometimes wit, but for ſolid reaſoning good ſenſe, I never in my life knew one that had it, or who reaſoned or acted conſequentially for four and twenty hours together. Some little paſſion or humour always breaks in upon their beſt reſolutions. Their beauty neglected or controverted, their age increaſed, or their ſuppoſed underſtandings depreciated, inſtantly kindles their little paſſions, and overturns any ſyſtem of conſequential conduct, that in their moſt reaſonable moments, they might have been capable of forming. A man of ſenſe only trifles with them, plays with them, humours and flatters them, as he does with a ſprightly forward child; but he neither conſults them about, nor truſts them with ſerious matters; though he often makes them believe that he does both; which is the only thing in the world that they are proud of; for they love mightily to be dabbling in buſineſs, which by the way, they always ſpoil, and being juſtly diſtruſtful, that men in general look upon them in

* 129th let. 2d vol.

in a trifling light, they almoſt adore that man who talks more ſeriouſly to them, and who ſeems to conſult them: I ſay, who ſeems, for weak men really do, but wiſe ones only ſeem to do it. No flattery is either too high or too low for them. They will greedily ſwallow the higheſt, and gratefully accept of the loweſt; and you may ſafely flatter any woman from her underſtanding, down to the exquiſite taſte of her fan."

Eug. I ſcarcely think it poſſible that theſe could really be his Lordſhip's ſentiments.

Con. You have not the leaſt cauſe to doubt of it, but every reaſon to be convinced that both here, and in all the other parts of his Letters he ſpeaks his genuine undiſguiſed thoughts.—But do you think that the Lady who has ſo exceedingly obliged the public in communicating to it theſe Letters, included his Lordſhip's opinion of the female world in the high compliment ſhe pays them when ſhe ſays that on account of their ſingular merit they would be handed down to poſterity?

Eug. If ſhe did, and thought herſelf one of the originals, from whoſe engaging lineaments his Lordſhip draws his picture, ſhe is either poſſeſſed of uncommon humility, or not much diſtreſſed with refinement and delicacy of ſentiment: at leaſt ſhe is a contradiction to her author's aſſertion, "that he who flatters a woman moſt, pleaſes her beſt, and that flattery is the only effectual

fectual way to obtain her good opinion; in the preſent inſtance illiberal abuſe ſeems fully as well to have anſwered that end.

Con. You are very right.——But what could be L——d Ch———d's reaſon for repreſenting his ideas of the female ſex as *arcanas* to his ſon? If they were founded in truth, no man of the leaſt acquaintance with the world could poſſibly be a ſtranger to them. But he was certainly right in calling them *arcanas*, for they were undoubtedly ſuch to every one but himſelf; none except one of his own accute penetrating diſcernment ever did, and I will venture to prophecy, ever will make ſo extraordinary a diſcovery.—But to give you my thoughts ſeriouſly on this point.—It would be a moſt unhappy matter were the view which our noble author gives of women in general, a juſt one.—Had they no reſpectable endowments of either the heart or underſtanding, they would be wretchedly qualified for acting the important part aſſigned them in the œconomy of nature.——How could they be capable of diſcharging their duty in the many valuable and honourable relations which they are appointed to fill, if they were void of ſenſe and good affections to preſerve them from folly, and and direct them to propriety of conduct?—Indeed his Lordſhip's account of them, if at all credited, muſt rob them entirely of eſteem, and make them objects of contempt and ridicule.—

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By ſinking them ſo very low in the ſcale of intelligent beings, they looſe almoſt all their conſequence, and cannot be conſidered with that attention and reſpect, which in every civilized nation of the world has been looked upon as their due.—The tendency in this reſpect of ſuch a way of thinking is extremely hurtful to thoſe relative duties, on the faithful performance of which, the comfort of individuals and ſociety greatly depends.—If a ſiſter is deſpiſed by a brother, is it to be expected that ſhe will receive kind and ſiſterly uſage from him.—If a huſband views his wife in this light, will not this be a ſtrong temptation to him to treat her not only with indifference but contempt? If a ſon has not that good opinion of his mother which is the foundation of eſteem, is it natural to ſuppoſe that he will honour her with reſpect and filial piety? A ſenſe of duty will no doubt have a becoming influence on the behaviour of the more wiſe and virtuous; but thoſe we are related to, or connected with, can never expect that affectionate treatment from us which flows from love, eſteem, and regard, if we ſuppoſe them to be deſtitute of the amiable qualities that are the objects of theſe feelings.—Beſides the immediate and direct effect of ſuch an opinion of the fair ſex with thoſe who may be ſo thoughtleſs and inattentive, as implicitly to adopt it, is to expoſe females to a thouſand times greater temptations, and make them infinitely

worſe.—There is a dignity in virtue that commands reſpect, even from the moſt diſſipated rake.—If he has reaſon to be convinced that any perſon of the other ſex on whom he has placed his inclinations, is poſſeſſed of it, he is ſtruck with a reſpectful awe which puts a ſtop to the progreſs of his unhallowed paſſion; diveſt him of that opinion, and let him think that nothing is wanting to enſure him of ſucceſs but a mode of addreſs ſuited to her prevailing weakneſs; he ſets his ingenuity to work, and lays before her every allurement, every inſiduous ſnare, in order to accompliſh his end: what frequently muſt be the conſequence of ſuch inſidious arts may eaſily be foreſeen.

Eug. But how can it be accounted for that L——d Ch———d ſhould entertain ideas ſo void of all foundation in nature and truth?

Con. I think very plainly in this way.—His Lordſhip, according to his own acknowledgment, gave himſelf very much up to the gratification of irregular deſires; this led him to be connected with women of no reputation for decency or virtue, and we may naturally conclude, ſilly, vain, and of little underſtanding.—It is alſo very probable that the honour of others fell a victim to his deceitful ſtratagems and alluring addreſs, who, had they not met with a perſon ſo eminently ſkilled in the methods of ſeduction, might always have preſerved an unſullied character.—

racter.——Hence he formed his opinion of the whole ſex as all rakes and libertines do.

Eug. He had a very bad principle to ſupport him in ſuch a concluſion.—But had he no foundation for it?

Con. None to juſtify his expreſſions with reſpect to this point.——It cannot be pretended that women are perfect; they partake of all the paſſions, and are ſubject to all the weakneſſes and infirmities of human nature, of which, by the way, in the other ſex, his Lordſhip does not entertain a very honourable opinion.—But does it therefore follow, that they are guided in every thing, by a regard to the graces, that all they do and ſay, tends to gratify their vanity and love; that no adulation, no ſimulation of paſſion is too groſs for them, that they are not capable of the pureſt and moſt untainted virtue? —Does it therefore follow that they are to be conſidered in no other light than as grown up children, that they are deſtitute of good ſenſe, fit to be trifled with, but not to be conſulted, or truſted with matters of a ſerious and important nature? How ignorant or full of prejudice muſt the mind be that could entertain ſuch ideas? Let us examine them a little.—As to the imputation on the female ſex, that they are guided entirely by a regard to the graces, one ſhould have thought that his Lordſhip would have been the very laſt perſon to bring this charge againſt them?

them; for is not this the ſhrine at which he intion? There are near 400 Letters publiſhed which he wrote to him, and almoſt the half of every one of them is taken up with advices to him on that ſubject.—Though the deſire of getting rid of a rival power lay very near the heart of the elder Cato, one ſimple expreſſion of it; *delenda eſt Carthago*, ſatisfied him at the concluſion of every ſpeech; but there is ſcarcely a ſentence in our author's Letters where he does not warmly take notice of the mighty, the infinite conſequence of the Graces.—*The graces, the graces*, are perpetually ringing in your ears.—Were they of the very great importance he repreſents them, they could not be over-rated.—A thing of ineſtimable value cannot be too highly prized. That they are of conſiderable importance is very certain.—A rough vulgar uncultivated addreſs and behaviour is quite unpleaſing; whereas elegance of expreſſion, the doing and ſaying every thing in a polite and eaſy manner, is extremely engaging and agreeable, but by no means to be compared, in point of dignity and excellence, with the internal beauties of the mind and an unblemiſhed converſation.—That from a deſire to pleaſe, many of the female, as well as of the other ſex, are too attentive to external attractions is very true; but certainly more can be pleaded in their behalf with reſpect to this, than can be ſaid for us.—You know that cuſtom, and the laws of modeſty forbid

that

that women ſhould make the firſt advances to the male ſex with a view to a union with thoſe whom nature formed to protect and ſupport them comfortably in future life.—Now the graces, the outward winning accompliſhments, are here moſt friendly to them, they make impreſſions, particularly in the beginning, greatly to their advantage, and plead with ſilent eloquence in favour of their fair votaires.—But at the ſame time, nothing, but the moſt ſhameful partiality can deny, that many of the female ſex, even in the gayeſt and moſt elevated ſtations, ſo far from being wholly engroſſed by theſe accompliſhments, do not pay a greater attention to them, or prize them more than they deſerve; they know the various qualifications neceſſary to their true happineſs, and put a value upon each according to its intrinſic excellence, and fitneſs to that end.—As to their vanity, one of the paſſions to which his Lordſhip ſays they are entirely devoted, it muſt be acknowledged, that they are the moſt elegant and beautiful part of the creation; and is it natural for them to be ignorant of this, and not to wiſh that others ſhould not be inſenſible to it?——As to the deſire of approbation for qualities that are naturally praiſe-worthy, this is not vanity; it is a principle which diſtinguiſhes the moſt virtuous and exalted ſpirits.—If however there are any of the female world who in every thing they do and ſay,

have

have an eye to praiſe for what in itſelf has no intrinſic excellence, I pity them, but will never be their advocate; at the ſame time it would be doing great injuſtice to the fair ſex, not to take notice that if a proneneſs to vanity is one of their predominant weakneſſes, this is in a great meaſure to be charged to our account.——They have paſſed but very little the age of childhood when with all the appearance of ſincerity, we begin to flatter their beauty, and perſonal accompliſhments; almoſt every thing we ſay to them, is in the ſtrongeſt terms o exaggerated praiſe? And is it wonderful that many of them ſhould believe us, ſhould think that they have engaging qualities which they have not, and value too highly the qualities which they have? At this time of life eſpecially they have naturally very open unſuſpecting hearts, which makes them more liable to be impoſed on, by the diſingenuous and alluring arts we make uſe of in order to deceive them.—I ſuppoſe no man ever took more pains in this particular to bait his hook with engaging colours, or paid them a more enticing tribute of adulation than L—d C———d; he was perhaps frequently too ſucceſsful; and therefore all the ſex were vain coquettes, pleaſed and delighted with nothing but flattery.—Had they paid no regard to his artful addreſſes, what name do you think he would have honoured them with?

Eug.

Eug. I ſuppoſe he would have called them affected prudes.

Con. There is not the leaſt doubt but he would. —Though let him have thought and ſaid what he pleaſed, it cannot be doubted but that great numbers of that ſex would, not only from appearance but the genuine feelings of their minds, treat all attempts to flatter them with merited contempt.—Love alſo it ſeems is a paſſion which has an entire aſcendance over them.—No doubt they have that feeling in common with us; they got it from the author of their being to anſwer the wiſeſt ends, and many there are who never pervert it to an unworthy purpoſe, never permit it to exceed the bounds of the ſtricteſt innocence and purity. But this I deny, ſaith his Lordſhip. If you do, it is the dictate of an unhallowed and licentious heart.—Every thing he has ſaid upon this ſubject may clearly be traced up to the ſame ſource; it tends to remove a very powerful reſtraint on the indulgence of irregular paſſions, and to encourage the moſt corrupt and licentious morals.—What multitudes of women are and have been adorned with as unſuſpected and incorruptible virtue as ever did honour to the memory of the chaſte Lucretia.—To harbour a thought or deſign inconſiſtent with untainted modeſty would make thouſands and ten thouſands of them miſerable.—If others have ſullied their reputation, perhaps in ninety nine inſtances

ſtances of a hundred, man who ſhould rather be the encourager, the friend and faithful guardian of their innocence, is the original cauſe to which this is to be aſcribed —Giving himſelf up to the influence and direction of a criminal appetite, he lays his ſchemes to undermine their ſentiments of virtue with all the cunning and inſinuating enticements which his artful ingenuity can deviſe —by flattery, profeſſions of the ſincereſt attachment, by promiſes, nay often by the moſt ſolemn vows and declarations, that his deſigns are honourable, he engages their affections, and then in an unſuſpecting hour he takes the advantage of their credulity and precipitates them into ruin— Utter ruin and loſs of eſteem is indeed generally the conſequence.—For the inhuman cuſtom of the world conſiders a ſingle blot in the character of a female as irretrievable infamy; inſtead of being encouraged by good advice and gentle treatment to return to the paths of virtue, ſhe meets with univerſal ſcorn, and is utterly caſt off from the regard of all her friends and connections; unprotected, and expoſed to the direful effects of neceſſity and deſpair, a ſeries of new temptations complete her deſtruction.—Do not you think that the firſt enticer to a crime attended with ſuch fatal conſequences, has much to anſwer for, Eugenius?

Eug. He is certainly in a great meaſure accountable for them, and muſt be unhappy in the

reflection, unleſs his mind is hardened to a ſenſe of complicated guilt.

Con. He undoubtedly muſt.—But to return to our ſubject.—The diſguſting colours in which Lord C———d draws the female character in general, are certainly very inconſiſtent with the common opinion of the world.—One convincing proof of this is, that from the moſt remote period, all the celebrated artiſts in ſculpture, painting, and poetry, have conſtantly repreſented the ſeveral virtues under a female form; which they would not have done, had they not well known that this would render their productions more pleaſing and agreeable; this they never could have done, had they in this reſpect contradicted truth, nature, and the general ſentiments of mankind.—That women are in general poſſeſſed of much greater purity and delicacy of morals than our ſex cannot be diſputed.—We are very ſenſible of this, and teſtify it on many occaſions.—An indecent expreſſion uſed in the preſence of women, is conſidered to be no better than ruſtic unpoliſhed barbarity, and a groſs violation of the firſt rules of decency and good breeding.——Have you not taken notice of the impatience which men frequently diſcover to get rid of the company of females?

Eug. I have, and wondered at this inſtance of their want of taſte.

Con.

Con. Want of taſte! They conſider their departure as a ſignal for beginning toaſts of a certain kind, and indulging themſelves in a levity of converſation, which puts virtue to the bluſh, injures the chaſte and delicate feelings of the mind, and encourages a vicious diſſipation of morals.—With reſpect to religion, a regard to which is one of the beſt marks of virtuous diſpoſitions, it is a fact well known, and highly to the honour of the female ſex, and were it not for the reſpect which they pay to it, the leaſt veſtiges of it, in many place would ſcarcely be perceived.—With reſpect to the indiſcriminate remarks my Lord has made concerning their want of good ſenſe, and their childiſh ignorance, they are hardly worth notice; that they have not the leaſt foundation in truth, the reſpectable figure which individuals of them have made, in hiſtory, criticiſm, poetry, is a convincing demonſtration.

Eug. I believe, Sir, very few of them have diſtinguiſhed themſelves in any of the branches of polite literature.

Con. True, many of them have not, but thoſe who have, are a proof of what others are capable, provided their faculties enjoyed the ſame advantages of education.—Particularly, I think it highly probable, that from the tender and delicate ſtructure of their minds they would diſtinguiſh themſelves in matters of taſte and imagination, much more than men, were they to turn their

attention to them. At the ſame time I cannot help obſerving, that whatever cauſe there may be to alledge that they have little force of underſtanding, this is very much owing to their not being furniſhed in the early part of life with the means of cultivation.—After they have received the firſt elements of inſtruction with reſpect to reading, &c. an attention to dreſs, dancing, muſic, and the other polite accompliſhments includes too frequently all the particulars of the education of females in the genteeler ſtations; whilſt a matter of much greater conſequence is neglected; the improving their minds in thoſe things neceſſary to qualify them for diſcharging with decency and propriety, the relative and domeſtic duties, particularly inſtructing their children; a moſt important office, which, in the early part of their life, is almoſt entirely committed to their care.—But with all their diſadvantage of education, women in general, begging his Lordſhip's pardon, have ſufficient underſtanding not only to be conſulted, but to be truſted with matters of the moſt ſerious and important concern.—Were not this the caſe, many a maſter of a family, in the management of his affairs, would appear in but a ſorry and contemptible point of view.—If the character, in point of ſenſe, with which L—d C———d compliments the fair ſex, was taken from his knowledge of the ladies in England, and is a

juſt

juſt one, it would appear that they have greatly degenerated ſince the conqueſt. For the hiſtorians of Britain of remote antiquity acquaint us, that " among them, women were admitted to their principalities, and general commands, by the right of ſucceſſion, merit, or nobility.——In the days of Boadicea, Cæſar's captains felt this to their coſt; and we know, that, not very long ſince, a woman governed the affairs of England with much honour to herſelf, and with diſtinguiſhed dignity and advantage to the nation, and proteſtant intereſt in Europe.——I ſhall only add this obſervation, that as the human kind is the workmanſhip of a Being of the moſt perfect wiſdom and benevolence, the different ſexes into which it is divided are formed with natural endowments ſuited to the particular ſituations they are intended to fill.—The reſpectable virtues which depend on the ſtronger and more vigorous exertions of the mind are requiſite to the ſphere aſſigned to man.—The ſofter and more amiable virtues become the circumſtances allotted to woman.—She has good ſenſe given to her, ſufficient to enable her to act the part preſcribed her with diſcretion and propriety, and a heart animated with ſenſibility.——From this texture of her conſtitution, ſhe is qualified in a peculiar manner for diſcharging with propriety, the kind and endearing offices of ſympathy and friendſhip, and for performing the various relative duties,

with an amiable ſweetneſs and tenderneſs of affection, which give a lively reliſh to our joys, and greatly alleviate our pains and ſorrows.—— Both ſexes by a proper uſe of their endowments become truly amiable, and ſerve a moſt valuable end; but when they pervert them to unworthy purpoſes, they are no longer objects of eſteem, and loſe all their dignity and excellence.*

* Lord Kaims in one of his ſketches has undeniably proved, that in the firſt ſtage of human ſociety, that is, the ſavage ſtate, women are of little or no conſideration, treated as ſlaves or brutes; but as ſociety refines and improves, women become of more conſequence, and when it arrives at its higheſt perfection, they are then put on a footing with men, with reſpect to rank, ſtation, and all the rights and privileges of nature, and according as they are treated more or leſs in this way, it is a mark of the civilization or barbarity of a people.

DIALOGUE

DIALOGUE VIII.

CONSTANTIUS, EUGENIUS.

Con. WE now come to the laſt particular of our enquiry with reſpect to L—d C———d's Letters, which is duelling.—Have you ever been at the pains to conſider it?

Eug. I cannot ſay I have brought my mind to any ſettled judgment in this matter.—For ſome time paſt I have wiſhed for an opportunity of talking with you on this ſubject, and ſhould be glad to hear your ſentiments of it, that I may know how to conduct myſelf with propriety on any future occaſion.

Con. I am glad of this opportunity. In a little time you will bid adieu to my inſtructions; you will finiſh your ſtudies, and mix with the active and buſy part of mankind; therefore you ſhould now endeavour to get a clear and diſtinct view of the manner in which you are to conduct yourſelf with propriety, in the various circumſtances in which you may be placed.—A prudent general arranges his army in order, and plans with wiſdom the mode of all his operations before he en-

ters into the hurry and confuſion of battle.——A virtuous and becoming courſe of action in every ſituation of life, can only be the reſult of deliberate and judicious principles.——The point we are now led to by the ſubject which on ſome late occaſions has engaged our attention, is by no means one of thoſe which is of the leaſt importance for you to be well informed of.——L—d C———d having given his ſon ſome inſtructions with relation to the manner in which he ſhould conduct himſelf on receiving certain offences, obſerves, * "that ſhould any thing be ſaid to him injurious to his honour or moral character, there was but one proper reply which he hoped he would never have occaſion to make." What he means by a proper reply is a challenge.—In another Letter he tells him, that on being injured in a particular way he muſt call forth his adverſary into the field, in order to demand ſatisfaction.—Perhaps there is ſcarcely an inſtance to be found in which the practice of mankind is ſo flagrant a contradiction to their ſound judgment and ſentiments, as duelling.——You will not meet with one in a hundred, (let him act as he pleaſe) who pretends to juſtify it.—When it is attempted to be vindicated, the arguments made uſe of for that purpoſe depend on the falſeſt principles and are too inſignificant to produce conviction.

The

* 151ſt Letter. 2d vol.

The circumſtances in which my Lord adviſes his ſon to have recourſe to a challenge, are thoſe in which an imputation has been caſt on his honour or moral character.—Tell me, Eugenius, what do you mean by the word honour?

Eug. I believe, Sir, it ſignifies the being poſſeſſed of thoſe qualities that render us the objects of approbation.

Con. Your definition is juſt; but do you think that any thing can be the proper object of approbation which is inconſiſtent with the laws of virtue?

Eug. I am perſuaded it cannot.

Con. I have not the leaſt doubt but I ſhall be able to convince you that duelling is to be conſidered in this light; if ſo, the practice of it can conſtitute no part of true honour, and muſt be a moſt extraordinary method for a perſon to take to vindicate his moral character.

Eug. But what, Sir, is the reaſon that duelling is confined to our part of the world; if I am not miſtaken, there was no ſuch practice in Greece and Rome, nor among any of the nations of antiquity, whoſe courage was never called in queſtion; and I believe there are many countries at preſent, who are as much ſtrangers to it.

Con. You are not miſtaken.—I will endeavour to explain that matter to you.——When the Goths and Vandals, and other barbarous nations deſtroyed the Roman empire, and ſpread

themſelves over theſe northern parts of Europe; they deſtroyed not only all the marks of polite literature, but thoſe of civilization alſo, wherever they came.—Inſtead of adopting the Roman laws, which by the wiſdom of the moſt celebrated legiſlators, during a long ſeries of ages, had been brought to a high degree of perfection, they continued obſtinately attached to their own cuſtoms; and introduced them among the people that were conquered by their arms.—I call them cuſtoms, for civil inſtitutions they had none.—Of the various methods they had recourſe to for the adminiſtration of juſtice, and preſerving the peace of ſociety, that of ſingle combat was particularly remarkable.—When any one thought that he had cauſe to charge another with violating his rights, he called him to the field, and according to particular forms, preſcribed and regularly obſerved on ſuch occaſions, ſupported by combat, the truth of his accuſation.*—Blinded by

* The origin of duelling hath been accounted for by an ingenious author thus. Among the barbarous nations which over-run the Roman empire, there was not ſufficient power to reſtrain the injurious, or to enforce exact diſtributive juſtice. The whole ſoldiery were fellow adventurers, and the meaneſt among them looked upon himſelf as on an equality with the leaders of the expedition. When any quarrel therefore aroſe between individuals, their commanders had no power of enforcing

by the darkening influences of ſuperſtition, they vainly thought that the ſupreme Being would immediately interpoſe in favour of the innocent perſon by giving him the victory; accordingly if the unfortunate combatant was not killed on the ſpot, the judges appointed to preſide in the conteſt, convinced of his guilt, inflicted on him an adequate puniſhment.—This mode of determining offences extended at firſt without exception to every member of ſociety, neither difference of character, of rank or condition could be pleaded as an excuſe from the obligations of it.—Aldanus, King of Sweden, and Adingus King of Denmark, were under the neceſſity of accepting challenges and entering the liſts with their own rebellious ſubjects.——Nay, what is more aſtoniſhing, even Eccleſiaſtics, the ſacredneſs of whoſe character might have exempted them from ſuch folly, were obliged for a long time to conform to this abſurd and irrational cuſtom. This cuſtom beginning with the very infancy of theſe nations, its influence ſo amazingly increaſed, that in length of time, the various particulars, relating to the cauſes and manner of conducting duels,

enforcing the deciſion they might be inclined to make. To decide the difference therefore they were obliged to allow the parties themſelves to ſettle them by the ſword, by which alone they had any right to the countries they poſſeſſed. See Robertſon's notes and illuſtrations on his preliminary diſcourſe to the Hiſtory of Charles V.

duels, were formed into a regular ſyſtem, or code of laws; but what moſt of all added to its power was the ſpirit of chivalry, which ſeized like a phrenzy the minds of every claſs of men about the middle of the dark ages.——In England the cuſtom of ſingle combat was not leſs the faſhion than in the neighbouring kingdoms; we are told that the judges of the court of Common Pleas, and ſometimes the Lord high Chancellor, and Earl Marſhal, preſided at theſe feats of arms, and pronounced ſentence.—You muſt eaſily perceive how extremely pernicious the conſequences of ſuch a practice muſt have been to the intereſts of ſociety.—Juſtice was perverted, innocence oppreſſed; the cruel, the ambitious and inſolent invader, was often crowned with honours, inſtead of ſuffering the puniſhment merited by his crimes.—Not only the individuals originally engaged in contention were diſtreſſed by it, very frequently their relations, their friends, their dependents, nay whole towns and communities were drawn into the diſpute and involved in the carnage and miſeries of war.—The minds of men beginning to be tired of evils ſo deſtructive of human happineſs, and advancing from ignorance and barbarity to a more refined and civilized ſtate, in which they were not a little aſſiſted by the revival of Letters, the cauſe of theſe calamities came to be gradually laid aſide.—Order aroſe out of confuſion. Laws were enacted conducive

to

to the public ſafety; the execution of which was committed to the civil magiſtrate who had a power veſted in him of inflicting a puniſhment on offenders, adequate to the nature of their crimes.—This remedy reſtrained within ſmaller bounds, but by no means entirely cured the diſeaſe.—For ſtill there are offences of a leſſer and more peculiar nature, for the puniſhment of which the law has made no proviſion; in reſpect to them the cuſtom of duelling is as prevalent, and as univerſal in theſe countries as ever.

Eug. I think I have been told that there are laws both in England and France that expreſsly forbid it.

Con. There are, but various methods are taken to elude them, which render them almoſt entirely uſeleſs, whilſt the ſpirit of it ſo ſtrongly prevails among thoſe who are opulent and powerful, that civil authority can have but little influence.—— Such a practice is perfectly conſiſtent with our idea of the character of a *Hun*, a *Goth*, or a *Vandal* in a ſtate of ſavage uncultivated nature; but that the leaſt traces of it ſhould appear among us their poliſhed deſcendants, who enjoy the moſt liberal advantages of improvement, and on whom the arts and ſciences have ſhed their genial humanizing influences, is not more aſtoniſhing than it is diſgraceful. As notwithſtanding we are ſtill ſo fond of this mark of our origin, and it is ſo much the taſte of the faſhionable world; to guard

you,

you, if poſſible, from its contagion, I will ſhew you on the cleareſt principles, that it is not only in the higheſt degree abſurd, but inconſiſtent with every juſt ſentiment of virtue and religion. —I ſay then firſt, that the practice of duelling is abſurd.—For conſider what the intention of any perſon is when he ſends a challenge to another. —Is it not that he may have an opportunity of properly reſenting ſome injury he has received from him? But is it a rational way of doing this to bring yourſelf into a ſituation where your antagoniſt will have the ſame power to make you ſuffer, that you will have to hurt him? Apply the ſame mode of proceeding to a matter of a ſimilar nature.——Suppoſe any one had robbed you of your property, and was to have inflicted on him the penalty determined by law; would you appear with him in open court, and declare a reſolution of ſubmitting with him to whatever ſentence the Judge thought proper to paſs on him. Would not a perſon injured who acted thus, be looked on as bereft of his ſenſes. Does not the perſon who calls the man to the field that has affronted him hereby declare that he is himſelf free from offence, that he has done him no injury? But is the ſubjecting himſelf to the hazard of being hurt, perhaps of ſuffering the moſt exquiſite torture, the juſt and natural reward of innocency?

Is the expoſing himſelf to a ſecond and worſe injury a fit method for obtaining a reparation of the firſt?

Our behaviour on ſuch occaſions is a thouſand times more irrational than that of an ignorant and barbarous Goth; for our minds are free from ſuperſtition, but he, if innocent, was convinced, that the Deity, as a mark of his approbation, would certainly protect, and bring him of conqueror.——Let us alſo conſider again the reaſon that is generally pleaded for giving or accepting a challenge.—You know it is that the imputation of diſhonour, or in other words of cowardice may be avoided.

Eug. I do Sir.——And I do not wonder that this motive ſhould have very great influence.—It muſt be an exceedingly mortifying thing for a man of ſpirit to lie under ſuch an imputation.

Con. I ſuppoſe, by ſpirit, you underſtand courage.—Inform me what you mean by courage.

Eug. I mean by it a contempt of danger, or a firmneſs of mind which raiſes it above the influence of fear.

Con. And can you imagine that fighting a duel is a proper evidence of the ſtrength of this principle? If you conſider the matter with attention, you will, I apprehend, be of the contrary opinion.—Is it a proof of true courage for a man to expoſe himſelf to a greater evil from the fear of a leſſer?

Eug.

Eug. It certainly is not.

Con. This then is preciſely the caſe with the duelliſt. He expoſes himſelf to the point of his antagoniſt's ſword, becauſe he has not fortitude to bear thoſe irrational reflections which might be caſt upon him were he to decline it.—You know that Cato by killing himſelf has acquired with numbers a character of exalted heroiſm; but fear was undoubtedly at the bottom of that unbecoming action.—He could not endure the thoughts of being ſubject to the power of Cæſar, after he had trampled on the liberties of his country, and therefore deſtroyed himſelf by a voluntary death.

In the like manner the duelliſt ſubmits to a ſhameful practice, becauſe he has not magnanimity to follow the light of his underſtanding and the honeſt dictates of his conſcience.—Conſider that the declining or accepting of a challenge, is no certain mark of courage. Some there have been of unqueſtionable bravery in the day of battle, who, from principle would not on any account fight a duel;—and others have fought dues, who, when brought to the true teſt, have proved themſelves arrant cowards, and turned their backs on the enemies of their country.—— Beſides, courage conſidered as a quality depending on a certain temperament of the conſtitution, and abſtracted from the motives from which it is exerted, cannot lay claim to our regard more

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than bodily ſtrength, or a feature of the countenance; otherwiſe, the bear or tyger of the foreſt, might with more propriety than man demand our reſpect.——So far is courage from having a title to our favour in all circumſtances, that when employed in a bad cauſe, it is univerſally deteſted.—Let it be exerted in oppreſſing the innocent, in robbing the widow and fatherleſs of their right, and it becomes the object of abhorrence.—.

Whereas the refuſing with ſteadineſs to conform to a vicious cuſtom, though authorized and ſupported by the faſhionable world, argues a manly reſolution, a dignity and excellence that conſtitute the nobleſt and moſt reſpectable fortitude.—Purſue this thought, and what is the concluſion? Why the advocate for duelling muſt not forfeit his honour, he muſt ſtand fair in the good opinion of mankind.

But of what part of mankind? Not the ſober, the wiſe, and judicious few; but the vain, the thoughtleſs, and undiſcerning multitude.—And is their approbation of ſuch infinite conſequence? But ſuppoſe him in poſſeſſion of this mighty acquiſition; has the man who refuſes to ſacrifice his conſcience to this criminal practice nothing as an equivalent? Can he meet with no friend to plead his cauſe or vindicate his reputation? Yes, every man of virtue reſpects, eſteems, and admires him.—And ſure the regard of a ſingle individual of ſober thought and reflection, who

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is a judge of real merit, is of greater importance, is much more honourable, than the giddy applauſe of ten thouſand of diſſipated manners, who have not ſenſe to diſtinguiſh and place a proper value on what is amiable and becoming. In ſuch caſes obloquy is praiſe, and every tribute of approbation beſtowed, a teſtimony of intrinſic worth.—But duelling, conſidered in every point of view, ſeeks its end in the ſtrangeſt and moſt unaccountable way.—If a perſon of ſuperior rank receives an affront from one of the loweſt and moſt deſpicable character, but well dreſt and of a genteel appearance, according to the laws of honour he muſt challenge him, oblige him to meet him on equal terms, and give him ſatisfaction. Thus it pretends to maintain the honour, and preſerve the dignity of a gentleman, by bringing him frequently to a level with the meaneſt, the moſt worthleſs, and contemptible part of mankind.——I will now endeavour to ſhew you that this barbarous cuſtom is inconſiſtent with juſtice.

Do not you think that it is one of the firſt principles of juſtice that we ought not to violate the rights of any of our fellow-creatures?

Eug. I do.———

Con. Yes, the perſon whoſe mind has a proper ſenſe of this virtue, will not ſtain the reputation of another, or hurt him in his perſon or property.—And beſides this, if he is injured himſelf,

ſelf, and puniſhment is neceſſary, he will adjuſt the kind and degree of it to the nature of the offence he has received; ſhould the puniſhment be greater than the offence, in proportion as it exceeded it, inſtead of being the injured perſon, he would become the offender. — For this reaſon he will not wiſh to puniſh himſelf, for he has felt from experience, that the reſentment which is excited by injury real or imaginary, takes pleaſure in nothing but its own gratification, ſtrives to extinguiſh every other feeling, and to make its object unhappy, without hearkening to the dictates of reaſon or humanity. To prevent us from determining in our own cauſe, for which we are ſo ill qualified by the pernicious tendency of this paſſion, laws in every civilized country have been inſtituted, which, as I before obſerved to you, take the puiſhment of offenders out of the hands of individuals, and lodges it in the power of the civil magiſtrate.—He ballances the ſcales of juſtice with ſtrict impartiality; free from prejudice and paſſion, he examines into the nature of offences, and with all the equity in his power, inflicts ſufferings on the guilty, according to the malignity of the injuries they have done.—— Now this fair adjuſtment of puniſhment to the nature of the offence committed, which has been conſidered as a moſt important object

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by the wiſeſt lawgivers, is utterly violated by the practice of duelling.

Not one in ten thouſand of thoſe offences, where this is thought the proper mode of redreſs, deſerves the penalty of death; nay in general they ſcarcely deſerve the ſlighteſt expreſſion of reſentment.—When crimes are committed of a capital nature, this kind of ſatisfaction is ſcarcely ever thought of.—

If a perſon is deprived of his property by another, of whatever ſtation, or has taken away from him the life of a relation or a friend, he does not challenge him for the injury, but conſigns him over to the puniſhment prepared for him by law.—The intention of the duelliſt is evidently to rob his antagoniſt of his life.—A ſlighting look or expreſſion, an accidental affront never intended, is to be puniſhed with the very ſame degree of ſeverity, as the moſt aggravated offence. Is this adequate? Is it equitable? Is a trifling inſignificant affront, a ſufficient reaſon for cutting off from ſociety ſo noble and dignified a creature as man.—Was ſuch an admirable piece of divine workmanſhip formed for ſo unworthy a purpoſe, was it made to be ſported with at the pleaſure of a moſt iniquitous and unhallowed cuſtom?

But I will not ſhew you how much it has alſo ſtampt upon it the want of humanity. Admirable is the proviſion made for the happineſs of

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our fellow-creatures in the conſtitution of the human mind. — There is implanted in it a feeling by which we are all linked together as it were by an inviſible tie. —— Examine it, and you will find that the influence of this principle is not merely confined to our relatives or intimate connections, but that it is extended to all who bear the common ſtamp of humanity.

In proportion as a benevolent principle is deeply engraven in our minds, as we are pleaſed with and approve of it, any practice injurious to it muſt be wrong and unbecoming.—But is it not the tendency of duelling to injure, nay to eradicate this amiable, this beſt of principles from the human heart? Alas! of how many uſeful and valuable members hath it robbed ſociety? How often hath it blaſted the enjoyments of private families, ſtruck a dagger into their peace, and plunged them into the depth of affliction? How often hath it torn from wives their tender and affectionate huſbands, and brought the hoary hairs of aged parents, with grief and ſorrow to the grave? — Reflect a little on the manner in which a perſon of nice punctilio, with reſpect to this inhuman cuſtom, is affected, and how he conducts himſelf. — He receives an affront that conſidered in itſelf, and probably in the moſt unfavourable point of view, ought, to diminiſh very little his happineſs, but which, were the motives to it and intentions

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from which it proceeded candidly and fairly examined, would perhaps dwindle into nothing; but his reſentment, heightened from its firſt beginnings by the influence of the laws of falſe honour, reſiſts the impulſe of reaſon, and labours to extinguiſh every propenſity of his nature.—Reflection of this kind ſucceeds reflection, until his faculties are wholly abſorbed and he is inflamed and animated by paſſion; he then haſtens to obey its impulſe, and call the offender into a ſituation where he will have an opportunity fully to gratify it.—Suppoſe him to be victorious and that he has utterly accompliſhed his deſtruction.—How long does his triumph continue? It is as fleeting as a ſhadow.—A conſciouſneſs of guilt terrifies the human mind, more eſpecially that of which malevolence is the cauſe, and which has produced unhappineſs to our fellow creatures.—He now feels this from dreadful experience.—Thoſe vain ideas of honour, and thoſe turbulent emotions, which hurried him to the action he has committed, all ſubſide, and leave full room for the bitterneſs of reflection.—In one fatal moment he has precipitated into eternity, engaged in an impious act to which he had himſelf tempted him, one, perhaps, to whom he was connected, not only by the common bonds of humanity, but, perhaps, the moſt endearing ties of friendſhip.—He perceives alſo that the relations of the unhappy

happy ſufferer penetrated with ſorrow for his loſs, conſider him with abhorrence and meritted indignation. — Every circumſtance that can heighten his crime, appears to him in the moſt aggravated light. —— Each ſucceeding thought encreaſes the poignancy of remorſe, and animates the accuſations of conſcience to torment him with their avenging ſcourge. — The remembrance of the hateful deeds caſts a melancholy gloom over his future proſpects, and tinctures with diſſatisfaction his beſt enjoyments through the remainder of life.

Eug. Theſe are indeed dreadful conſequences; but are they common to all in the circumſtances you have mentioned?

Con. Thoſe whom unfeeling habit has rendered deaf to the voice of virtue and humanity may be ſtrangers to them, but they are certainly natural to every one in ſuch a ſituation, as numbers can bear witneſs from their miſerable experience.

Eug. But if I may not gratify my reſentment by puniſhing thoſe who injure me, why was that feeling implanted in my mind?

Con. You may juſt as well aſk why you were furniſhed with any of the other paſſions, for every one of them prompts you to indulge it. — All the ſeelings of nature are wiſely ſuited to the circumſtances of our Being, and are intended to anſwer a valuable end; but that can never be obtained unleſs they are reſtrained in their gratification

fication within due limits, but of thoſe limits they are altogether incapable of judging, the fixing them is entirely the province of reaſon and the commanding faculties of the mind.—Thus reſentment, as well as benevolence, was given us to promote the general happineſs; it was planted in us to prevent the tender affections on certain occaſions from degenerating into weakneſs, and to defend us againſt the effects of violence and all manner of injuſtice. But when we permit it to lead us to puniſh others, merely with a view to its indulgence, and in a manner or degree which is more than proportionable to the nature of the offence, we directly contradict the deſign for which we were furniſhed with it.—Now you muſt ſee from what I have ſaid to you on the ſubject, that a greater abuſe of reſentment than duelling cannot be conceived.—When expreſſed in this way, inſtead of being a preſervative from evil, its natural tendency and effect is to produce abundant miſery, not only to the individuals more particularly concerned, but to all thoſe immediately connected with them.——I ſhall only farther take notice to you with reſpect to this practice, that beſides the conſiderations I have mentioned, Religion moſt expreſsly forbids it.—The Deity never intended that any rational Being whom he hath ſo honourably diſtinguiſhed as man, ſhould ſacrifice his life, or even expoſe it to the ſmalleſt riſk from reſpect

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to a vain punctilio, or iniquitous cuſtom.—We are placed here in our ſeveral ſituations, like ſo many centinels on their poſts, which amidſt every tryal and temptation we muſt maintain with dignity to the end.—To deſert them wantonly from vanity or paſſion, is a wilful and preſumptuous contempt of the wiſdom and juſtice of Omnipotence, which merits his higheſt diſpleaſure. But if the arguments ſuggeſted by the light of nature leave any doubt unſatisfied with reſpect to the impiety of this practice, the Chriſtian Religion muſt certainly remove it, which under the ſeveral penalties, and with the ſtrongeſt and moſt authoritative emphaſis, forbids the indulgence of the wrathful and malevolent paſſions.

The temper of mind from which it proceeds, is not more inconſiſtent with the example, than the expreſs precepts of our divine Law-giver, who commands the forgiveneſs of injuries, and ſuſpends our own forgiveneſs on that condition. —This point is ſo clear that it requires no illuſtration. I hope *Eugenius*, you are now convinced that Lord C———d's advice to his ſon with relation to duelling, can as little be defended, as that on other ſubjects which we before conſidered.

Eug. I am, Sir, and have only to wiſh that my preſent ſentiments may always influence my conduct.

Con. If they do not, my inſtructions will be of no importance to you. Your only danger

will ariſe from the cuſtom of the world, which the minds of too many have not intrepidity to get the better of.

But to enable you to become ſuperior to it, I entreat you to fortify your mind with this reflection, which I have often inculcated before, that no mode of conduct which is in itſelf wrong, can poſſibly be ſanctified by faſhion; and whilſt you act from this principle you may behave in ſuch a way as to avoid, at leaſt in a great meaſure, thoſe fooliſh imputations which the thoughtleſs are too apt to caſt upon ſuch, as have the virtue to be ſingular in thoſe matters. We know that ſeveral have refuſed to comply with the faſhion in this particular, without being ſubjected to the leaſt ſuſpicion of timidity.—With this view I would recommend to you on all occaſions, a manly firmneſs and dignity of manner which ſeldom fail to command reſpect, and will impreſs others with a perſuaſion that you have a ſufficient degree of fortitude to oppoſe danger, when you are called into a ſituation in which you think it is your duty to exert it. Do not imagine that any law, human or divine, forbids ſelf defence, when you are wantonly inſulted and attacked. No, the great law of ſelf-preſervation, requires this as a duty you owe not only to yourſelf but to your family and country. But this is by no means inconſiſtent with a peaceable temper, not eaſily inflamed or prone to take offence, but ever ready to forgive and to put the moſt candid conſtruction

ſtruction on mens words and actions. Particularly, on every proper opportunity, declare it to be your determined purpoſe, that you will neither give nor accept a challenge, and give your reaſons for it with that ſteady reſolution which a conſciouſneſs of acting from right principles ever inſpires. I cannot ſuppoſe that you will give any man a reaſonable cauſe to be offended with you, but if it ſhould ſo happen, it is your duty, and altogether becoming the character of a gentleman to make a ſuitable apology; ſhould your intentions at any time be miſunderſtood, and ſhould you be thought to have injured any perſon, command your feelings, and explain the miſtake with calmneſs and good nature; this, it is highly probable, will ſettle the matter to your ſatisfaction.—But ſhould you be the injured perſon, conduct yourſelf in the ſame manner; reſtrain your paſſion, examine cooly the nature of the offence; the intention of it and motives from which it proceeded; if you do ſo, you will find that of one caſe in twenty, you have little to be diſpleaſed with, and conſequently may eaſily forgive; ſhould it fall out otherwiſe, let not reſentment hurry you into a criminal action, but exert that noble magnanimity which conſiſts, in ſacrificing one of the ſtrongeſt feelings of our nature, to a ſenſe and rectitude of conduct.—— By acting this part, you need not be afraid of paſſing through life with dignity and reputation.

I have now taken notice of the ſeveral things that are chiefly exceptionable in Lord C——d's letters. If the obſervations they contain on manners, hiſtory, and politicks, expreſſed in the moſt agreeable and elegant ſtyle, had not been ſullied by ſentiments prejudicial to virtue and common decency of morals, they would be a valuable acquiſition. But theſe deſtroy their value and render them exceedingly pernicious.—There are already too many temptations in the world to diſſipation; this ſingular temptation need not have been added to them.—It is certainly a ſingular one, for I may venture to aſſert, that from the moſt remote antiquity, another inſtance cannot be produced of a Father proſecuting, through a ſeries of years, even to a pretty advanced age, a regular and deliberate ſcheme for corrupting the morals of his Son, and making uſe of every art and enticement in order to accompliſh it.—Parents, whatever may be their own principles or practice, generally appear diſpleaſed with vice in their children, expreſs at leaſt ſome degree of anxiety for their virtue, if not from the love of itſelf, from a regard to common decency, and their own character in the world. But theſe ideas were treated by his Lordſhip with contempt.

In what a different point of view would theſe letters appear, if they contained the inſtructions of a parent, who whilſt he took pains to adorn his ſon with all the graceful and pleaſing accompliſhments,

pliſhments, was ſtill much more ſolicitous, to regulate his paſſions; to ſave him from the allurements of vice; to inſpire him with a regard for religion, and animate him with the love of virtue? Then, whilſt the reader would be entertained with the beauty and elegance of language, his mind might receive impreſſions that would contribute to its improvement; but now the pleaſure which he enjoys from an agreeable arrangement of thoughts, expreſſed with eaſe and propriety, and from ſeveral uſeful obſervations on life and manners, is far more than overbalanced by the looſe ſentiments he continually meets with, that have a dangerous tendency to ruin his taſte for virtue and corrupt his heart.—But if there are any of his Lordſhip's Readers who cannot ſee this, whoſe ſtrained panegyrick of this publication has mixed with it no allay of cenſure, you may be certain that this is owing to depravity of mind, or want of reflection.—The caſe of thoſe, who are prejudiced in favour of it from the former cauſe is hopeleſs, it is quite vain to reaſon with them on the ſubject; as to thoſe who are fond of it from the latter, ſhould you beg of them to conſider whether they would like to have a father or a ſon exactly of that character which it labours ſo induſtriouſly to form; a moment's thought would oblige them to anſwer your queſtion in the negative.—Should you extend your enquiry a little farther, and aſk them

if they would wiſh to belong to a ſociety compoſed of ſuch characters, every individual of which was thoroughly ſkilled in the arts of cunning and diſpoſed to practice them; was licentious in his morals, had no fixed principle of virtue, no rule of action, but the faſhion and ſelfiſh deſire of promoting his own intereſt and gratification; the moſt natural reply undoubtedly would be; that rather than be members of ſuch a community, they would fly to the moſt inhoſpitable uncultivated deſert.—Why then do they give their countenance and approbation to a book of ſuch a tendency?

Is not the applauding it indiſcriminately, the ſpeaking well of it, a moſt effectual method of ſpreading more extenſively its infectious poiſon? and ſurely they who do ſo are in a great meaſure anſwerable for the conſequences.—Lord C——d was earneſtly deſirous to form the diſpoſitions of his ſon by the model of his own example; he ſeems indeed to have been much pleaſed with his own accompliſhments, with the uſe he made of them, with his diſſipated taſte, and the ſucceſs he had in the gallantries of the gay and faſhionable world; this way of thinking continued with him to a late period of life, but it forſook him before he dropt into the grave.—For we find that in his will, written in his ſeventy ſeventh year, he deprecates the juſtice of that eternal being, whoſe pure and excellent laws he was then ſenſible he had

had violated. And as to the vain and licentious pleaſures which had been the ſubject of his boaſt, and centre of his happineſs; he calls them pompous follies.—And what was the reaſon of this? Why, the deceitful dream was gone.——Thoſe deluſive objects which had perverted his underſtanding and his taſte, had vaniſhed.——Things appeared as they were, not in thoſe foreign colours in which they are dreſſed by prejudice or paſſion.—The near proſpect of that world into which he was going to enter, opened the eyes of his mind, taught him that vice and irreligion were inconſiſtent with true wiſdom, unbecoming the nature of man, and offenſive to his God.—I am afraid *Eugenius*, you are quite tired with the ſubject; but before I finiſh it, I muſt give you the following advice, which I beg you may attend to, as it proceeds from my earneſt deſire of your happineſs.

Be conſtantly on your guard againſt thoſe temptations which have a tendency to pervert your judgment and corrupt your heart.—Multitudes of them ſurround you on all hands, ſome of them open and viſible, whilſt others lurk in diſguiſe; the pernicious influence of the latter kind can only be avoided by a quick diſcernment and watchful circumſpection.——You laid aſide lately thoſe friendly guardians, and were likely to fall into the ſnare.—On every ſuch occaſion, you are threatened with the ſame kind of temptation.

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—Not only Lord C———d's Letters, but all other books written with a deſign to undermine the principles of religion and virtue, endeavour to attain their end, by a ſpecious appearance and inſinuating addreſs.—The authors of them know this to be abſolutely neceſſary, and that an open attack upon things conſidered to be ſo venerable and ſacred, would excite general deteſtation.—Sometimes their concluſions are fair, but when you trace them to their ſource you find them deduced from falſe principles; they will again aſſume principles the juſtneſs of which cannot be diſputed, but then they draw conſequences from them that cannot be admitted.—An elegant perſuaſive eloquence of manner and expreſſion, and a refined ſubtile dexterity of reaſoning, are very powerful auxiliaries on ſuch occaſions.—Moſt commonly every ſuch truth deſigned to be ſhaken, is attacked under the deluſive pretext of friendſhip.—But ſift theſe fallacies to the bottom; ſtrip every thought of its deceitful ornaments; compare it, and others connected with it, with the dictates of ſound Judgment, and you will run no riſk of being impoſed upon.

The influence of cuſtom, as I have often mentioned to you, is another dangerous temptation of which you ſhould be continually watchful. Cuſtom is a torrent which has a tendency to hurry down with irreſiſtable violence all who comes within its power.—What, ſays the advocate

cate for faſhion, would you have me to be ſingular? Would you have me to be pointed at and ridiculed? It is impoſſible for a man to live in the world, with any character, without complying with the manners of it.——This *Eugenius*, is a fatal rock on which the virtue of thouſands and ten thouſands have been ſhipwrecked.—Write this truth on the bottom of your heart in the ſtrongeſt characters, that cuſtom can as well make two to be a thouſand, as alter the unchangeable and permanent laws of right and wrong, of virtue and vice.—No power on earth can make that to be proper and becoming which is not in its own nature juſtifiable.——And that which is right cannot be changed into its oppoſite, by all the faſhions in the univerſe; therefore when in your way through life you are required to comply with any cuſtom, if you are convinced that it is improper, that it cannot be reconciled to the dictates of truth, and integrity, let no poſſible perſuaſion prevail with you to conform to it.—But in things that are indifferent, ſhew a chearful inclination to pleaſe, and render yourſelf agreeable to thoſe you are connected with.—As a flexibility of manners in the former caſe, would render you contemptible to yourſelf and to all wiſe men, obſtinacy with reſpect to the latter, would argue a want of benevolence, and an indifference to the ſentiments of others, which

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you ſhould ever moſt carefully avoid.—Nothing but a reſpect for the approbation of conſcience can be a proper apology for ſingularity. So far as virtue will permit, you ſhould do every thing in your power to engage the good opinion of thoſe you live among. Affability, good-nature, politeneſs, and eaſy genteel addreſs will be very conducive to this, and ſet off to advantage your more reſpectable qualities.——I by no means think the graces of the ſame conſequence as Lord Ch———d, but they certainly very well deſerve your particular attention.—The pleaſing, the amiable, and reſpectable qualities united, form a character which is the higheſt perfection of human nature.—But the moſt finiſhed accompliſhments, unadorned by thoſe endowments which in their own nature command reſpect, have neither beauty, dignity, nor excellence; and I may add, can give very little ſatisfaction.——Whereas the pleaſures ariſing from thoſe diſpoſitions that command eſteem, or from a becoming regard to virtue and religion, are not only noble and elevating in themſelves, but a ſpring of the trueſt enjoyment.———Religion, not as repreſented by wild fanaticiſm or gloomy ſuperſtition, but in her native dreſs is a lovely engaging form, and one of the beſt friends of human happineſs.—

How

How does the inimitable beauty of the works of nature, their perfect regularity, harmony and order, their exquisite contrivance and design, considered as the effect of consumate wisdom and excellence, delight the imagination, and excite feelings in the mind, which are a source of the most agreeable entertainment.—— Believe me *Eugenius*, love and esteem for the amiable perfections of the Deity, with the discharge of those duties which flow from them, afford the highest satisfaction.——Virtue is the conformity of the will, and our conduct in life, to the laws of the infinite eternal Being; and consider whether every wise man should not make it the object of his choice.—Many indeed think, that it imposes severe restraints on their gratifications, and that it is an enemy to enjoyment.——But enquire into the reason.——It is becaufe she forbids the irregular indulgence of the passions, requires us to sacrifice a lesser good to a greater, always to prefer such pleasures as are rational, permanent and exalted.———The enjoyments which virtue recommends are delicate, do not disturb the tranquility of the mind, or disorder its affections; they are pure, sublime and unallayed by the bitterness of remorse.—Build then your happiness on this immoveable foundation,

dation, and you will have peace in your own heart, dignity in the world, a ſweet and pleaſing reliſh of eſtiſtence, which will be not a little heightened by thoſe bright and enlivening proſpects which lie open to you in the diſtant ſcenes of futurity.—But I muſt leave you.

ADIEU.

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FINIS.